United Nations A/53/477

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 94 (a)
Environment and sustainable development: implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

Ways and means of undertaking the review of progress made in implementing conventions related to sustainable development

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The development of international environmental law has been one of the most rapidly evolving fields in international relations over the last decade. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the progressive development of international environmental law related to sustainable development provides a new and innovative response by the international community in terms of building and enhancing a process to address the most pressing global environmental challenges. This development has inspired new and innovative concepts, principles and ideas and resulted in facilitative and enabling mechanisms and procedures in areas such as implementation and compliance and dispute avoidance and settlement, among others. It is playing, thereby, an increasingly important role in promoting the integration of environment and development and providing an effective legal and regulatory framework for underpinning the efforts of the international community to achieve sustainable development.

2. The total number of legal agreements dealing with environment and sustainable development is rising while the average time taken to negotiate each treaty is steadily decreasing. Within the same time-frame, the scale of problems to be addressed has widened – from the regional through the hemispheric to the global – while the total number of sovereign States that have to participate in the negotiation of such legal arrangements has gradually burgeoned. New concerns and principles – precaution, inter- and intra-generational equity, scientific uncertainty, sustainable development – have also arisen in recent years and now need to be factored into the negotiation process. Clearly, the definition, negotiation and creation of the various legally binding conventions and protocols on the environment represent an outstanding achievement of the international community. Binding international conventions now exist in areas as diverse as climate change,[1] biological diversity,[2] desertification[3] and, most recently, prior informed consent of trade in hazardous chemicals and pesticides. While this represents an impressive record of achievements of the international community, it also raises the issue of the need for continuing policy coherence among the various instrumentalities that exist in this area, at both the inter-agency and intergovernmental levels.

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3. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the review of progress in the implementation of specific conventions has increasingly been in the agenda of the sessions of the General Assembly. Such reviews, however, have been restricted to specific conventions, in particular those related to biological diversity, climate change and desertification. Increasingly, however, intergovernmental concern has come to focus on the need to ensure policy coherence among the various instruments, particularly in light of the burdens imposed on Member States due to the proliferation of meetings and mechanisms, and also to ensure that the cross linkages among the various subject areas are recognized, as well as to promote the efficient and effective implementation of the conventions.

4. Within this context, the General Assembly, in its decision 52/445 of 18 December 1997 entitled "Progress in the implementation of conventions relating to sustainable development", decided to continue to review the progress made in implementing the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or established as a result of the Conference, as well as other conventions related to sustainable development, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on the ways and means of undertaking such a review. The present report proposes elements of an intergovernmental process that the Assembly may take into consideration in its deliberations on how such a review could be carried out.

5. At its nineteenth special session, the General Assembly, by its resolution S/19-2 of 28 June 1997, adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[4] annexed to that resolution, wherein the Assembly made a number of specific and relevant recommendations. These included a recommendation that the conferences of the parties to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, as well as to other conventions related to sustainable development, should cooperate in exploring ways and means of collaborating in their work to advance the effective implementation of those conventions. The Assembly recognized that institutional arrangements for the convention secretariats should provide effective support and efficient services, while ensuring the appropriate autonomy necessary for them to be efficient at their respective locations. The Assembly stated that at the national and international levels there was a need for, *inter alia*, better scientific assessment of ecological linkages between the conventions; identification of programmes that had multiple benefits; and enhanced public awareness-raising with respect to the conventions. The Assembly recommended that such tasks should be undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in accordance with the relevant decisions of its Governing Council and in full cooperation with the conferences of the parties to and governing bodies of relevant conventions. The Assembly, in recognition of the role played by UNEP in the development of many of these conventions, also recommended that the role of UNEP in the further development of international environmental law should be strengthened, including the development of coherent interlinkages among relevant environmental conventions in cooperation with their respective conferences of the parties or governing bodies. In performing its functions related to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, and other relevant conventions, UNEP should strive to promote the effective implementation of those conventions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the conventions and the decisions of the conferences of the parties.

6. The General Assembly also recognized the importance of the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP,[5] adopted on 7 February 1997 by the Governing Council of UNEP at its nineteenth session, in further refining the role and mandate of UNEP. With respect to international environmental law, the Nairobi Declaration provided as core elements of the focused mandate of the revitalized UNEP, *inter alia*, the further development of international environmental law aiming at sustainable development, including the development of coherent interlinkages among existing international environmental conventions; the advancement of the implementation of agreed international norms and policies; and the monitoring and fostering of compliance with environmental principles and international agreements and the stimulating of cooperative action to respond to emerging environmental challenges.

7. Further to the adoption of General Assembly decision 52/445, the Secretary-General established the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements, chaired by UNEP's Executive Director (see A/53/463). Among its terms of reference, the Task Force was mandated to review existing structures and arrangements through which environment and environment-related activities are carried out within the United Nations, with particular reference to those departments, funds and programmes that report to the Secretary-General, but also taking into account the relevant programmes and activities of the specialized agencies. Furthermore, the Task Force was requested to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of existing structures and arrangements and make recommendations for

such changes and improvements as would optimize the work and effectiveness of the United Nations environmental work at the global level and of UNEP as the leading United Nations environmental organization or "authority", as well as the role of UNEP as the principal source of environmental input into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

8. Following an in-depth process, the Task Force made a number of recommendations germane to the future review by the General Assembly of progress in the implementation of the conventions related to sustainable development (see A/53/463, annex, sect. III). In particular with respect to the mandate emanating from the nineteenth special session of the Assembly, the Task Force recommended (2 (a)) that UNEP base its support to global and regional conventions on its capacities for information, monitoring and global assessment which should be strengthened substantively and urgently. This echoes the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP. The Task Force also recommended that UNEP build its capacity and networks to ensure the scientific underpinning of conventions, and facilitate their implementation. The Task Force further recommended (2 (b)) that UNEP continue to support joint meetings of heads of convention secretariats to ensure that the work programmes established by the conferences of the parties and the substantive support provided by UNEP were complementary, filled gaps and took advantage of synergies. The Task Force further recommended (2 (c)) that the President of UNEP's Governing Council be invited to consult with the presidents of the conferences of the parties to selected conventions on arrangements for periodic joint meetings of representatives from those conventions so as to address cross-cutting issues arising from their work programmes and policy approaches. It is recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements (A/53/463) containing, in its annex, the report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements, which is also currently before the Assembly at its fifty-third session.

9. With the report of the Task Force to be discussed by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, it is quite clear that the Assembly should begin to play an important role in the overall development of international environmental law related to sustainable development from a more cross-sectoral and integrated perspective than has been the case so far. In line with the recommendations put forward by the Task Force for steps to be taken by UNEP, recommendations that in part provide core elements of an intergovernmental process of review, such a review by the Assembly should be policy-oriented and well prepared and constitute the culmination of an intergovernmental process that would allow the Assembly to:

(a) Undertake periodic integrated assessments of progress in conventions that could be carried out on a thematic or issue basis;

(b) Identify and make policy recommendations on interlinkages among various conventions;

(c) Promote policy coherence among the provisions of various legal instruments and activities undertaken to implement them;

(d) Identify overlap or inconsistencies among the various instruments;

(e) Identify and promote areas of activity that have multiple benefits;

(f) Provide consolidated policy advice rather than separate sectoral resolutions.

10. The outcomes of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly and the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of UNEP, as well as the recommendations of the United Nations Task Force, provide modalities on how such a review could be organized. Criteria that would underpin such modalities should include the following points:

(a) That policy decisions under the conventions are undertaken by their respective conferences of the parties which are autonomous bodies;

(b) That the interlinkages among conventions are strengthened with a view to achieving synergies and multiple benefits and promoting coherence of policies and actions.

11. Consistent with paragraph 38.22 (h) of Agenda 21, UNEP should take action to continue to support joint meetings of heads of convention secretariats to ensure that the work programmes established by the conferences of the parties and the substantive support provided by UNEP are complementary, fill gaps and take advantage of synergies. The annual meetings that UNEP has sponsored have addressed potential areas for increased cooperation and common issues such as implementation at the national level, including development of relevant national legislation and institutions, capacity-building and technical assistance. They could also serve to identify the cross-cutting issues to be brought to the attention of the UNEP Governing Council, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the General Assembly.

12. Building on this initiative, and in a manner consistent with the provisions of the conventions and the decisions of their conferences of the parties, UNEP in close collaboration with the convention secretariats and the scientific community could examine and provide studies on the overall progress of the implementation of the conventions. These could include a legal assessment of the effectiveness of existing instruments as well as an addressing of the issue of compliance or limited compliance by parties, and identification of the need for additional protocols or amendments. The programmatic and substantive perspective could provide scientific assessments of ecological linkages between conventions, with a view to identifying potential overlap or conflicting implementing actions possibly providing early warning signals to conferences of the parties as they consider additional provisions. This perspective might also help to identify programme areas that could lead to joint projects by convention secretariats, UNEP and other concerned United Nations organizations, building on the success of current bilateral initiatives between conventions that have been developed on an as-needed basis.

13. Furthermore, pursuant to its mandate as the lead agency in facilitating the implementation of international environmental law and its development into a cohesive and coherent body of law, UNEP has pursued a programme for the development and periodic review of environmental law for the 1990s known as the Montevideo Programme. Through this programme, UNEP has played a pivotal role in assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition in strengthening their legal, institutional and human capacity for meeting their obligations under international environmental law. UNEP could bring to the attention of the General Assembly progress in this respect as well as gaps and further requirements.

14. In line with the recommendation of the United Nations Task Force, the President of UNEP's Governing Council could be invited to consult the presidents of the conferences of the parties to selected conventions on arrangements for periodic joint meetings of representatives from those conventions in order to address cross-cutting issues, and the Executive Director of UNEP and the heads of convention secretariats could organize and attend these meetings. This could provide the opportunity for secretariat heads to present the conferences of the parties, for their consideration through their representatives, with the outcomes and recommendations of the joint meetings of the heads of secretariats of global and regional conventions. In turn, the results of the joint meetings of the representatives of the conferences of the parties to the conventions would be brought to the attention of UNEP's Governing Council, and to the Commission on Sustainable Development as appropriate. It is hoped that the General Assembly will give support to this recommendation.

15. The outcome of the Governing Council's deliberations on the coordination of conventions, informed by the reports of the joint meetings of the convention secretariats and the further consideration of those integrated assessments by the joint meetings of the bureaux of the conferences of the parties, could provide an input, for its consideration from the social and economic perspective, into the deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Such a process could also be organized to coincide with the issues on the programme of work of the Commission in any particular year. It could also be presented in a report to the General Assembly. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to consider placing an item devoted to "an integrated assessment of progress under conventions related to sustainable development" in the agendas of its regular sessions every alternate year. This could assist in developing and enhancing the process of an integrated assessment of progress in the implementation of the conventions, with a view to achieving synergies, and ensuring that the international community derives maximum benefits from its investments in this system of legal environmental instruments, without detracting from the individual focuses and mandates of the autonomous conventions.

16. Consideration could be given to the opportunity to undertake a comprehensive integrated assessment of progress in the implementation of conventions at the review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 (Earth Summit + 10) in the year 2002, following the process of review extending through UNEP's Governing Council to the Commission on Sustainable Development and the General Assembly, as outlined above. As intermediary steps, UNEP could initiate this proposed process of review on a thematic basis. The proposed modalities would also allow the Assembly to play an enhanced role in building political support for the conventions and their implementation, as well as in promoting public awareness of their importance.

Notes

[1] A/AC.237/18 (Part II)/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex I.

[2] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

[3] A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

[4] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I,

Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/52/25), annex, decision 19/1, annex.

United Nations A/53/478

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 81
Effects of atomic radiation

Effects of atomic radiation

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 52/55 of 10 December 1997, the General Assembly invited the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization to consider the functions and role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and to submit a recommendation to the Assembly at its fifty-third session.

2. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the attached report, which was prepared by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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Annex

Report prepared by the International Atomic Energy Agency

I. Functions and role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

1. In performing its functions and role, the Committee reviews published reports and technical documents submitted by States Members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and then estimates levels and effects of exposure to ionizing radiation. It reports to the Assembly, submitting brief progress reports on its activities most years and a substantive report on its findings every five years or so. The latest substantive report was issued in three parts, in 1993, 1994 and 1996.[a]

2. At the time when the Committee was established, there was widespread concern in many countries about the hazards of radioactive fallout disseminated by the then ongoing testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. The Committee's activities have since expanded to cover the collection and evaluation of information on levels of ionizing radiation in general, including radiation from sources other than nuclear-weapons tests. Thus, the sources of exposure to ionizing radiation currently assessed by the Committee include: the natural background (cosmic rays incident upon the Earth and terrestrial radionuclides present everywhere in the environment – and also in the human body itself); human activities and practices such as the production and use of radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals, medical and industrial applications of radiation, and nuclear power production (including the mining and milling of uranium ores); and the radioactive residues from past nuclear-weapons testing and radiation accidents.

3. The Committee also studies the biological effects of exposure to ionizing radiation and estimates the inherent risks of harm to health from such exposure. These effects include acute tissue damage from high radiation doses (so-called deterministic effects), such as those resulting from overexposure in the course of accidents, and late somatic and hereditary effects attributable to low-level radiation doses (so-called stochastic effects). Risk coefficients for stochastic effects are estimated from epidemiological studies of radiation-exposed population groups, including the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, patients exposed to radiation for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, radiation workers, and individuals exposed to enhanced environmental radiation. They are also estimated in the light of the findings of radiobiological research. The results of the Committee's assessments are the basis for quantitative estimates of the health effects of radiation exposure on human populations.

4. In 1995, the Committee embarked upon a new programme for reviewing sources of exposure to ionizing radiation and its biological effects. According to present expectations, a comprehensive report with detailed scientific annexes will be published in the year 2000. The Committee's assessments will, as in the past, constitute an authoritative basis for evaluating and comparing exposures to ionizing radiation from the various sources. Further understanding of the mechanisms of cellular damage caused by and of cellular responses to ionizing radiation and the biological effects in organisms will provide a sounder basis for determining the risks of radiation exposure. The Committee is to examine the data available for assessing the risks of radiation-induced malignancies and hereditary effects at low doses and dose rates. Increased emphasis is being placed by the Committee on the assessment of combined – synergistic – effects of ionizing radiation and other genotoxic agents.

5. Thanks to its independent method of operation and the quality of its reports, the Committee has contributed substantially to the quest for a safe radiation environment and become a worldwide authority in its field. IAEA is of the view that the Committee has fulfilled in an exemplary manner the functions and role assigned to it by the General Assembly in resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955 and that the Committee's functions and role, which are of major importance to IAEA, continue to be appropriate.

II. Administrative arrangements for the Committee secretariat

6. The Committee is served by a secretariat, currently consisting of one Professional staff member (the Director of the secretariat, at present Burton Bennett) and two General Service staff members. Documents for review by the Committee are prepared mainly by consultants whose services are often made available free of charge by United Nations Member States. The financial resources of the Committee are provided by the General Assembly through the programme budget of the United Nations.

7. The Committee secretariat was originally located in New York, at the Headquarters of the United Nations, with the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs responsible for administrative arrangements. The idea then arose of transferring it to Europe, apparently in order to facilitate liaison with the secretariats of relevant international organizations based in Europe, such as IAEA and the World Health Organization (WHO), and with the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which was to have a regional office in Geneva. In 1974 the Assembly accepted an offer of accommodation made by the Government of Austria, and the Committee secretariat was transferred to Vienna.

8. In 1976, the secretariat of the Committee was attached to UNEP, ceasing to be an administrative responsibility of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs. In accordance with an agreement between the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Executive Director of UNEP, however, administrative support services for the Committee secretariat were provided by the UNIDO secretariat. With its establishment in 1979, the United Nations Office at Vienna assumed responsibility for providing such services for the Committee secretariat.

III. Relationship between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Committee

9. IAEA and the Committee have a broad area of common professional interests and expertise – namely, the study of the levels and biological effects of exposure to ionizing radiation. However, the functions and role of IAEA in this area differ somewhat from those of the Committee. They are, as spelled out in the IAEA Statute, to establish standards of safety for protection of health against ionizing radiation and to provide for the application of these standards at the request of States. Nevertheless, when formulating such standards IAEA has relied on the Committee's estimates of the health risks associated with exposure to ionizing radiation, those estimates being considered to represent the United Nations position on the subject. For example, the Committee's estimates have served as the basis for the International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources, which were approved by the IAEA Board of Governors in September 1994.[b]

10. Because of their similar professional responsibilities, it is not surprising that IAEA and the Committee have a history of close cooperation. Their cooperation started as early as 1959, when the Committee and IAEA joined together in helping IAEA member States to promote a worldwide system of radiation measurements,[c] and in 1961 the Director General made a commitment to consult with the Committee on issues such as emergency assistance in connection with radiation accidents.[d]

11. In the early years of the two organizations, however, the cooperation between the Committee and IAEA was from time to time a matter of concern for some IAEA member States. For example, in 1961 one member State expressed the view that IAEA, as an organization seeking to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace throughout the world, should not be connected with the Committee, whose estimates related mainly to the radiological consequences of nuclear-weapons testing, and it was even stated on another occasion that IAEA activities on intakes of radionuclides into the human organism represented an "intrusion" into the Committee's sphere of competence;[e] and, in 1962, a proposal to hold an IAEA symposium on the biological effects of neutron irradiation was queried on the grounds that the subject also concerned the Committee.

12. As the practice of nuclear-weapons testing in the atmosphere declined and the scope of the Committee's activities expanded, the relationship between IAEA and the Committee called for closer coordination. In June 1971, when the relationship between the two was discussed in the IAEA Board of Governors, a member State observed in a memorandum that the Committee had enlarged the scope of its activities to include some IAEA functions,[f] and it was suggested that the members of the Committee, which were also States members of IAEA, should examine the question of avoiding duplication of effort.[g] In that context, the Director General stated in June 1971 that cooperation with the Committee had been good but, since the Committee would in future be concentrating more on the peaceful uses of atomic energy, care should be taken to avoid duplication.[h] However, some IAEA member States, which clearly felt that the Committee and IAEA had useful complementary functions, were less concerned about the potential for duplication than about the independence of the Committee. The Chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors summarized the Board position at the time by saying that cooperation between IAEA and the Committee should be intensified.[i]

13. The cooperation between IAEA and the Committee continued to grow in the mid-1970s, with the transfer of the Committee to Vienna being noted in the IAEA annual report

for 1974/75.[j] Since the early 1980s, the work of the Committee has been reported on in the IAEA annual *Nuclear Safety Reviews*, which are submitted to the IAEA Board of Governors and published by IAEA. In 1984, during the Board's discussion of the *Nuclear Safety Review, 1983*, it was stated that the present conceptual consistency of radiological safety was due, *inter alia*, to the work of the Committee, to which IAEA had made a significant contribution.[k]

14. Cooperation between the Committee and IAEA grew even further in the 1980s. An important stage was the work done on revising the definition of "high-level radioactive waste or other high-level radioactive matter unsuitable for dumping at sea" required by the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter.

15. Cooperation between the two was closest in the late 1980s, in the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident: the Committee secretariat and the IAEA secretariat both carried out several surveys relating to the accident; the Committee secretariat joined with IAEA in carrying out the International Chernobyl Project; and it cooperated with IAEA, the European Commission and WHO in the organization of the major 1996 conference entitled "One Decade after Chernobyl – Summing up the Consequences of the Accident". However, this was not the only case of cooperation between the two in the aftermath of an accident: in 1993, following an explosion at a reprocessing plant in Tomsk, Russian Federation, the Committee secretariat took part in the IAEA mission that assessed the radiological consequences.

16. Since then, the Committee secretariat has taken a very active part in the 1995 IAEA assessment of the radiological situation and the need for remediation at the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands and is currently taking a very active part in a similar assessment organized by IAEA at the Atolls of Mururoa and Fangataufa in French Polynesia, which started in 1996.

17. Lastly, there was close cooperation between the Committee and IAEA (and WHO) in organizing the 1997 International Conference entitled "Low Doses of Ionizing Radiation: Biological Effects and Regulatory Control", held in Seville, Spain, at which the Committee's present Chairman, Alexander Kaul (Germany), and the present Director of the Committee secretariat submitted the latest Committee estimates in a keynote presentation on sources, exposures and biological effects of ionizing radiation.

IV. The Committee's reporting arrangements

18. A proposal for merging the Committee's secretariat with the IAEA secretariat was considered by the General Assembly in 1991. In section 17, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 46/185 C of 20 December 1991, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to study the possibility of alternative arrangements for the secretariat of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Ionizing Radiation, including its possible merger with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The request, which may have been prompted by the fact that both bodies are based in Vienna and concerned with ionizing radiation, was considered in the light of the mandates and structures of IAEA and the Committee.

19. The IAEA secretariat felt that it was important to preserve the Committee's full independence and, in February 1992, in the IAEA Board of Governors, the Director General said that the initiative regarding a possible merger had not come from the Agency, which had not, in fact, been consulted. The Committee's mandate, which involved the scientific review and evaluation of the levels and effects of ionizing radiation, was quite distinct from that of the Agency. It was his view, therefore, that to maintain their effectiveness the two organizations should remain separate.[l]

20. The Committee addressed the merger issue in June 1992, and in a report to the General Assembly it stated that the Committee concluded that the alternative arrangements for its secretariat suggested in General Assembly resolution 46/185 C of 20 December 1991 might well prejudice the perception of both its authority and its independence.[m]

21. Since then, there have been two developments which may have implications for the Committee's reporting arrangements: the adoption by the General Assembly, on 10 September 1996, of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the initiation of the current measures to strengthen the United Nations system.

22. The present situation as far as the Committee's reporting arrangements are concerned can be inferred from General Assembly resolution 52/55, which refers in its preamble to Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997. It should be recalled that in that resolution the Assembly, when taking note of the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System,[n] called upon the relevant intergovernmental bodies to implement fully the measures specified in the text contained in the annex to the resolution to strengthen the

work of the United Nations system, in particular of the General Assembly and the Secretariat, and invited, *inter alia*, the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system to implement the measures for strengthening the system that are specified in the text contained in the annex to the resolution and that are within their respective areas of competence. In paragraph 38 of the annex to Assembly resolution 51/241, it is recommended that the Assembly invite IAEA and WHO to consider the Committee's functions and role and to submit a recommendation to it in 1998 and that the Committee should be asked to submit its next report to IAEA and WHO as well as to the Assembly, which would discuss the report along with any evaluation of it by IAEA and WHO.

V. Recommendation to the General Assembly

23. In the light of this background, IAEA still considers that the Committee should continue to perform its present functions and role and that its authority and independence should be preserved. **IAEA therefore recommends that the General Assembly maintain the present functions and role of the Committee, including the present reporting arrangements.**

24. Noting that the General Assembly has in the past considered alternative arrangements for the Committee, including its possible merger with IAEA, should the Assembly decide to alter the institutional arrangements for the Committee (notwithstanding the recommendation made in paragraph 23 above), IAEA is of the view that the Committee should be attached to IAEA, since it is the United Nations system organization that benefits most from the Committee's expertise and contributes most to its activities. Under any such alternative arrangements, IAEA would ensure that the Committee's authority and independence were still maintained.

VI. Evaluation of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly

25. The report informs the General Assembly of the activities of the Committee and presents its views on its specific role and functions as well as its programme and methods of working.

26. In line with the IAEA recommendation, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly maintain the present functions and role of the Committee, including the present reporting arrangements.

27. The report recalls the establishment of the Committee by resolution of the General Assembly in 1955, when the principal concern was the hazards of radionuclides in the environment as a result of the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. Over the succeeding 43 years, the focus of the Committee has broadened to cover the assessment of man-made radionuclides released to the environment from the large growth of civil nuclear power programmes and the use of radionuclides in medicine, agriculture and industry. There has also been a growing realization of the extent to which mankind is exposed to natural sources of ionizing radiation. The report points out that it is the Committee's substantive periodic reports to the General Assembly rather than the annual progress reports that have reviewed these changing levels of dose.

28. Over the period since 1955, the Committee has kept under review epidemiological, experimental and, recently, molecular biology studies on radiation effects. The Committee regularly scrutinizes the available data, especially the Japanese survivor data, to assess the cancer risk estimates. It also reviews the evidence for harmful effects in future generations.

29. The Committee has become the primary international scientific body reviewing and assessing the health risks of exposure to ionizing radiation. Its estimates have been, and are still being, used by major international bodies such as the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) and by United Nations organizations, including WHO, ILO, FAO and IAEA, as the basis for international standards of protection.

30. The participants in the meetings of the Committee are representatives of its 21 States members (and their advisers) and observers from relevant international organizations. Both WHO and IAEA send observers to attend the Committee sessions, and there is close collaboration with them in the development of Committee reports. For this reason, the Committee does not see the need for pre-publication evaluation of its reports by WHO or IAEA. It also comments that such evaluation could be seen as adversely influencing the independent perspective which is essential for the credibility of its reports. IAEA concurs with this view and emphasizes the importance of the Committee maintaining full and independent responsibility for the content and conclusions of its scientific reports.

31. The report outlines the scientific topics to be covered in the future programme of work. These follow the

established areas of competence of the Committee and include such topics as:

- A review of all the information available on the Chernobyl accident, particularly the reported high incidence of thyroid cancers in those exposed as children;
- The continuous assessment of cancer mortality and incidence data of survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and validation of derived risk estimates with those from studies of medically or occupationally exposed groups;
- A review of the possibility of harm in the progeny of exposed persons and the alteration and loss of genetic information by damage to the DNA in human cells;
- Compiling information originating from many countries to assess both the level of exposure and the associated risk from radon in buildings;
- Keeping under review the population exposure resulting from the disposal of radioactive waste and residues arising from, *inter alia*, the decommissioning of nuclear facilities;
- Assessing the global trend in diagnostic x-ray examinations, and use of radiopharmaceuticals, and radio therapy;
- Drawing attention to accidents with medical sources.

The IAEA considers that all these topics are of great interest to its activities.

32. IAEA will continue to use the Committee's estimates to support its statutory functions of establishing standards for the protection of health against ionizing radiation and of providing for the application of these standards at the request of States.

Notes

[a] United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.94.IX.2, E.94.IX.11 and E.96.IX.3.

[b] See IAEA document GOV/OR.847.

[c] See IAEA documents GOV/517 and GOV/OR.191.

[d] See IAEA document GOV/650.

[e] See IAEA documents GOV/OR.246 and GOV/OR.248.

[f] See IAEA document GOV/OR.440.

[g] See IAEA documents GOV/1454 and GOV/1475.

[h] See IAEA document GOV/OR.440.

[i] Ibid. The position of the United Nations Secretary-General at that time was that any change in the UNSCEAR reporting arrangements would have constitutional implications.

[j] See IAEA documents GOV/1735, 1735/Add.1/Rev.1 and 1735/Add.2 and GOV/OR.478.

[k] See IAEA document GOV/OR.622.

[l] See IAEA document GOV/OR.773.

[m] See General Assembly document A/47/293.

[n] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 24* (A/51/24).

United Nations A/53/479

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 91 (b)
Macroeconomic policy questions: financing of development, including net transfer of resources between developing and developed countries

High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development: work of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary General

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/179 of 18 December 1997, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report to be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-third session on the work of the United Nations to address financing for development. In response to an inquiry from the Secretariat to assist in the preparation of that report, replies were received from the following bodies: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations International Drug Control Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations University (UNU) – Institute for Advanced Studies, Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Food Programme (WFP), World Bank and World Trade Organization.

2. The Secretariat inquiry set out eight broad headings to guide organizations in making their replies: mobilizing domestic resources for development, mobilizing international private financial flows for development, international financial cooperation for development, external debt (bilateral, multilateral and commercial), trade and financing for development, innovative sources of financing, governance of the international monetary, financial and trade systems, and interrelationship between elements and other special topics.

3. The present report draws from the replies many examples of new approaches being taken by the different organizations. Most of these organizations have a wide range of activities relating to finance for development and, within the space limitations of this report, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive description of the activities of each organization. In particular IMF, in its reply, explained that it has a vested and active interest in all of the issues in the questionnaire and that they occupy its staff on a daily basis.

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Most of the topics mentioned are also reviewed regularly by government representatives through discussions of the Executive Board. Information on these activities is contained in the *Annual Report* of IMF. Similarly, the *Annual Report* of the World Bank contains a description of its activities relevant to financing for development. In addition, the Internet Web sites of IMF and the World Bank (see www.imf.org and www.worldbank.org respectively) carry an extensive list and, in many cases, the full text of relevant documents and studies. The focus of this report will therefore be on organizations of the United Nations system other than international financial institutions.

Overall perspective: the Agenda for Development

4. The organizations of the United Nations system play many roles in the matter of financing for development. In the first place, they help finance development through programmes in developing countries. These various activities, undertaken to fulfil the mandates of the different organizations, are subject to the oversight of their governing bodies. Matters of coordination and of selecting the most worthwhile projects are always present for consideration. The Agenda for Development (see General Assembly resolution 51/240 of 20 June 1997, annex) described the efforts of the United Nations system to improve the functioning of funds and programmes at the country and headquarters levels. The Agenda stressed the need, however, for a substantial increase in resources for United Nations operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, while also stating that new approaches to financing the international development cooperation activities undertaken by the United Nations, including innovative funding sources, should continue to be examined.

5. The Agenda for Development also provided an analysis in a broader sense of steps that should be taken to finance development. It described how development is one of the main priorities of the United Nations and a multidimensional undertaking for the purpose of achieving a higher quality of life for all people. The effective implementation of the Agenda thus required the urgent mobilization and more efficient use of resources for development – public and private, financial and human, national and international.

6. The Agenda set out a series of measures that countries and the international community should take to raise finance for development. An appropriate level of domestic savings should be achieved and countries should explore new ways of generating new public and private financial resources, *inter alia*, through the appropriate reduction of excessive military expenditures, which bears on global military expenditures and the arms trade and investment. The savings efforts of developing countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries, needed to be supplemented by external resources so as to raise investment to the levels necessary for adequate and sustained economic growth. New and innovative ideas for generating resources for development should be explored. The international community, including the international financial institutions, was invited to continue to explore ways of implementing additional and innovative measures to alleviate substantially the debt burdens of developing countries. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative was welcomed, and the Agenda requested that eligibility criteria should be interpreted flexibly so as to ensure sufficient coverage.

7. The Agenda highlighted the importance of reversing the overall decline in flows of official development assistance (ODA) and of achieving internationally agreed ODA targets as soon as possible. Countries should also honour their commitments in Agenda 21[1] to provide resources to promote sustainable development.

8. The multilateral financial institutions should continue to play a major role in development and in promoting the stability of the international financial system. They were urged to increase cooperation with other development activities of the United Nations system. Regional development banks should continue to play an important role in the financing of development and the adequate and timely replenishment of their concessional mechanisms was essential in this context.

9. The Agenda emphasized how special attention should be given by all countries to measures aimed at promoting international investment flows and enhancing their contribution to development. In order to encourage domestic investment and to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), it was essential to have in place a stable, supportive, effective and transparent legal framework. Governments in the developed countries should facilitate long-term investment flows to developing countries.

10. The Agenda, which was adopted less than a month before the eruption, in July 1997, of the present financial crisis, emphasized how the globalization and growth of financial markets had given rise to the need for improved measures to address the negative effects of the volatility of

international capital flows. It set out an agenda for action, some parts of which have been implemented in the past year. It stated that the prevention of financial crises required enhanced early warning mechanisms, including improved and effective surveillance of national and international financial market developments. Because prevention could fail, enhancing the capacity of multilateral institutions to respond in a quick and coordinated fashion was required. Financial mechanisms needed to be developed for this purpose, as well as to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The international community was asked to explore ways to broaden appropriate enhanced cooperation and, where appropriate, coordination of macroeconomic policy among interested countries, and monetary and financial authorities and institutions, so as to enhance preventive consultation arrangements between such institutions. An example of action along the lines suggested by the Agenda was the adoption of the Emergency Financing Mechanism of IMF in September 1995 to strengthen its ability to respond swiftly in support of a member country facing an external financial crisis. This mechanism was first used in July 1997 in approving a support package for the Philippines.

Research activities

11. The Agenda did not foresee the full extent of the shortcomings in the world's financial architecture and the financial systems of individual countries which were revealed in the course of 1997 and 1998. Many United Nations bodies are undertaking research into aspects of the global and national financial systems, often in partnership with other international organizations, universities, research centres, private companies, non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society. This research is frequently followed by outreach programmes to bring it to the attention of decision makers.

12. For instance, UNU recently completed research on, *inter alia*, "The impact of liberalization on key markets in sub-Saharan Africa", "Growth, the external sector and the role of non-traditional exports in sub-Saharan Africa", "Short-term capital movements and balance of payments crises", "New models of provision and financing of public goods" and "Asia and Africa and the global economy". It has also started research on information technology and growth, and on environmental, export and human development problems in natural resource-based growth models.

13. The regional commissions have carried out relevant research that was published in their economic and social surveys and in other publications. For instance, ESCAP referred in its *1998 Economic and Social Survey of Asia*,[2] to Development paper, No. 19, on *Foreign Direct Investment in Selected Asian Countries: Policies, Related Institution-Building and Regional Cooperation*[3] and to a presentation by the Director of Development Research and Policy Analysis entitled "The dynamics of Asian economic crisis and selected policy implications".[4] ECLAC referred to "Pension funds, the financing of transition costs and financial markets development" (LC/R.1822), "Flujos de capital externo en América Latina y el Caribe en los años noventa: experiencias y políticas" and "La relación entre el ahorro externo y el ahorro nacional en contextos de liberalización financiera".

14. On the subject of mobilizing international private financial flows for development, UNCTAD's research included the report and issues paper of the UNCTAD Expert Meeting on the "Growth of domestic capital markets, particularly in developing countries, and its relationship with foreign portfolio investment" (TD/B/COM.2/EM.4/2 and TD/B/COM.2/EM.4/3), the secretariat report "Foreign portfolio investment: implications for the growth of emerging markets" (UNCTAD/GDS/GFSB/4) and its annual *World Investment Report*.

15. UNCTAD's research of relevance to international cooperation for development, external debt and the governance of the international monetary, financial and trade systems is included in its annual *Least Developed Countries Report*, in the *Trade and Development Report* and in the series of publications under the general heading of *International Monetary and Financial Issues for the 1990s*. In connection with trade and financing for development, UNCTAD is to publish a survey on export credit agencies. Concerning innovative sources of financing, there is a series of research publications and newsletters by the UNCTAD secretariat on greenhouse gas emissions trading dating back to 1992.

16. UNIDO indicated that its *Industrial Development Global Report, 1997*[5] was devoted to the financing of industrial development.

17. Within UNDP, the Office of Development Studies (ODS) of the Bureau of Development Policy reported that it seeks to enhance private and public financing of development as one of its major goals. It has sponsored studies and publications that aim to influence the policy dialogue, mobilize follow-up research at the global, regional and country levels, and build capacity in the area of development finance. Since 1996, it has published six discussion papers and three working papers on financing development. ODS is currently preparing two books relating

to the theme of financing development. The first, *Global Housekeeping: A New Approach for International Development Cooperation*, will, *inter alia*, examine the financial implications of rethinking development cooperation to secure the provision of global public goods. The second, *Private Finance for Human Development*, aims to close the gap between the abundance of investable private finance and the unfulfilled financial needs of poor people.

18. The Regional Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean of UNDP has supported research and analysis of the potential and challenges of using pension funds to finance development in Latin America. In May 1997, it organized a seminar to discuss the pitfalls, promises and power of pension funds in Mexico.

19. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat undertakes search and analysis on several dimensions of financing for development, ranging from the handling of financial data within the System of National Accounts (SNA) and institutional innovations in financing sustainable development to an examination of the linkages of various financing questions to social development. Its recent reports cover a range of considerations from micro- to macro-finance. In addition to reports for intergovernmental bodies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat publishes major studies such as the annual *World Economic and Social Survey*. It organizes as well expert group meetings, such as the semi-annual forecasting meeting of Project LINK, where financial constraints on economic growth are a frequent subject of consideration. It also organizes ad hoc expert groups, such as the one arranged in July 1998 in cooperation with the regional commissions to assess the current crisis of international financial volatility (the results of that meeting are to be published by UNU Press).

Outreach and involvement of the private sector in research and analysis

20. In terms of outreach, UNDP described how it had supported the Chairman of the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session in organizing briefings for delegates to the United Nations on financing for development in preparation for the high-level meeting to be held in 2001. (This cooperative endeavour also involved the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNCTAD, IMF and the World Bank). In addition, ODS is a co-sponsor of the Money Matters Initiative, a public-private policy approach involving leading private investors. It has also organized regional and country-level workshops and seminars on private finance and issues of sustainable human development with members of the Money Matters Institute.

Training and capacity-building

21. United Nations bodies undertake a range of training and capacity-building activities relevant to finance for development. For instance, through projects like the Inter-Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship and Investment Training and the help it gives to the development of focal points for industrial and technology promotion, UNIDO builds capacity for continued financial flows into the industrial and service sectors. Of particular relevance are activities relating to strategies, policies and institution-building to assist small- and medium-sized enterprises in integrating into the global economy. UNIDO pays particular attention to financing, innovation, productivity and quality for international competitiveness, human resources development, including the integration of women in industrial development, investment promotion networking and regional programmes.

22. FAO reported that its Policy Assistance Division is the central channel for providing member countries with policy advice and assistance related to national development policies, programmes and strategies in the agro-rural sector. Its Regional Policy Assistance Branches assist member countries in the formulation of policies and strategies aimed at creating a favourable economic environment for rural development, thus opening good opportunities for investment of domestic and international capital. It also provides assistance through training and the production and dissemination of training manuals in strengthening national capacity for policy analysis, formulation and implementation, and for analysis of agricultural investment projects.

23. The programme of technical cooperation in public administration of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat has a large financial management dimension. It also supports technical work on international cooperation in tax matters, and other finance-related activities.

Debt management

24. The United Nations is providing technical assistance to help countries manage their external debt. The Regional

Bureau for Africa of UNDP, in collaboration with UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis Section, has focused on improving collection, compilation, recording and reporting of debt data, installation and operation of software packages, training of national staff, and reinforcing of institutional capacity for debt management. Recent activities include the Regional Bureau for Africa's participation in the activities of Debt Relief International, an initiative funded by Austria, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland to assist the HIPCs in preparing debt policies and strategies. A working group led by the resident representative of Uganda is reviewing the debt situation in countries emerging from conflict; and discussions were held in June 1998 on the Multilateral Debt Fund for Rwanda.

25. As a result of a programme that ended in 1994 and involved UNDP, UNCTAD and the World Bank, the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa was set up as a permanent regional institution to provide support to national capacity development in the area of debt management. RBA and UNDP are currently preparing a project on African debt, which will provide an inventory of debt initiatives and actors and will sample needs and existing capacities in the area of debt. It will prepare an options paper and framework that will draw on fieldwork to describe and analyse the debt situation in Africa.

Mobilizing international private financial flows for development

26. Countries are also being assisted in obtaining access to international financial markets. The Regional Bureau for Africa of UNDP, for example, has undertaken a study on the experience of Mauritius with regard to sovereign risk rating and is organizing "trial runs" of credit ratings for five countries. It is undertaking sensitization activities to familiarize African officials with the requirements and processes of credit ratings and is training African officials on trade and investment promotion (with funding from Singapore).

Mobilizing domestic resources for development

27. The importance of enabling the poor to obtain small loans to undertake economic activities is widely recognized. The Private Sector Development Programme of the Bureau of Development Policy of UNDP developed "MicroStart" in response to demand from country offices for a practical and operational product to support them in this field. Country offices commit to funding their participation (the figure is set at $1.5 million) by using their own core resources or by mobilizing resources from other partners (possibly government, donors or the private sector). A MicroStart project will consist of two integrated components: (a) a micro-capital grant component in which 5 to 10 or more local organizations receive grants of up to $150,000 in seed capital for loans and overhead costs and (b) a technical services component in which an international best practitioner provides a range of technical services to the local recipient organizations. UNDP has prepared a list of 30 qualified micro-finance institutions and six consulting firms that can be contracted to provide these services at a standard fee of $500,000 over a three-year period.

28. In May 1997, UNDP also launched a Global MicroStart Programme designed to undertake pilot initiatives at the country level through cost-sharing. So far, 50 countries have expressed an interest. To date, 20 country offices have earmarked full funding towards the programme in the amount of $1.5 million or more. Twelve countries have committed $16.8 million in funding for MicroStart.

29. Another pertinent activity is that of the Consultative Group on Assistance to the Poorest for which UNDP helps mobilize support from banks and other financial institutions.

Involvement of the private sector in financing United Nations operational activities

30. United Nations bodies are increasingly involving the private sector in the operations, projects and programmes that they are supporting.

31. FAO, for example, is giving increased emphasis to public/private partnership as a way to increase the effectiveness of its activities, as well as to leverage additional resources for development. In 1995, it created a Unit for Cooperation with the Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organizations to provide a focal point and coordination for FAO's relations with the private sector and to promote partnership initiatives. A new strategy for partnership has been approved and a new publication outlining experience and areas for collaboration will be published shortly.

32. One major element in this cooperation will be an expansion of the activities of the FAO Investment Centre.

The Centre helps countries prepare investment projects for international financing by the World Bank and other development banks. In 1996, it helped prepare projects worth $2.5 billion. Increasingly, these projects include private sector components. The Centre is also now starting to work with national commercial banks.

33. FAO's collaboration with the private sector involves direct private sector support for its activities and collaboration in fieldwork. For example, the private sector has provided all the costs of maintaining FAO's "Telefood" campaign. FAO launched the Special Programme for Food Security to help low-income, food-deficit countries increase food production and productivity as rapidly as possible, primarily through the widespread adoption by farmers of improved production techniques. The private sector can be involved in each phase of the Special Programme, from the exploratory phase to the undertaking of the investment. A global private sector network (International Agri-Food Network) and an Italian Private Sector Committee are examples of new mechanisms to provide for more comprehensive private sector involvement in the Special Programme.

34. FAO's cooperation with international industry associations has facilitated trade, technology transfer and investment in developing countries. The International Fertilizer Industry Association, for example, has supported a wide range of FAO initiatives and is now a partner with FAO, the World Bank and others in the Soil Fertility Initiative, which is focused on sub-Saharan Africa.

35. UNIDO's activities are focused on building capacities for investment and technology promotion, with the private sector becoming the dominant partner together with the public sector in the mobilization and utilization of investment resources from both international and domestic sources. Its Investment and Technology Programme is conceived and carried out in an integrated manner, encompassing the entire project cycle. It covers the establishment of national policies for creating the enabling environment for promoting investment flows; building national capacities for project identification, preparation, evaluation and promotion; developing and effectively utilizing technological capabilities and other technical skills; developing and promoting entrepreneurial capabilities, especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises; investment project negotiations, start-up and implementation; continuous quality management, standardization and meteorology; industrial technological and business information networking; and environmentally sustainable industrial development. The above activities are carried out at the national, regional/subregional and international levels. UNIDO has also developed a network of partners – Investment Promotion Agencies or Offices in developing countries and major developed countries — they are in contact with the donor Governments and the private sector international centres of excellence in leading emerging technologies as well as other international funding agencies involved in promoting the flow of investment and technology to developing countries.

36. In addition, UNIDO provides a wide range of services for private sector support. Its tools include methodologies to identify and formulate investment/technology transfer proposals, application of software to appraise their potential, and the organization of investors and of investment technology markets (INTECHMARTs) to bring together international partners for investment and technology transfer.

37. The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP has been helping bring venture capital to development. For instance, in collaboration with the Association of Enterprises in Buenos Aires and Mendoza, it has been helping identify opportunities for venture capital. The South-North Institute, a non-governmental organization, joined hands with UNDP in designing a pilot programme to involve the local private sector in creating employment opportunities for the low-income population.

38. Similarly, in its Public-Private Partnership for Urban Environment, UNDP is helping direct private capital investment flow to areas of critical importance to sustainable development, namely water and sanitation, waste management and energy. It uses its knowledge and analysis capabilities to create an enabling environment for private sector investment in areas that would otherwise not be seen as attractive opportunities for generating revenues. An example of its work was a project in Manizales, Colombia, which aimed at providing domestic waste collection services to 21 municipalities, in addition to examining the business potential of an efficient coffee-washing process. The project attracted $600,000 from a private company that was involved in the solid waste recycling programme and in producing fertilizer from biodegradable refuse, as well as in recycling of plastic, glass and paper for sale.

Indirect assistance to mobilizing finance for development

39. In some cases, the connection between an agency's work and finance for development is indirect. For instance, ICAO drew attention to the fact that air transport has an

integral role in the world economy as a tool for conducting much of the world's business, as a foundation for the tourism industry and as a cost-effective means of distributing goods and services. Similar considerations apply to the work of UPU. It reported that it had undertaken an important project in a large developing country to reform that country's postal system as a "self-financing fund". UNDCP reported how financial flows based on illicit earnings from drug trafficking or other crime do not contribute to development, but rather have the opposite effect of undermining legitimate enterprise, concentrating wealth in the hands of a small number of individuals and diverting resources from government budgets. It operates, jointly with the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations Secretariat, a global programme on money laundering, targeting the strengthening of institutions to prevent or combat money laundering and related economic crime.

Innovative sources of financing

40. Specific examples of innovative sources of financing were included in the replies. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) described how, in keeping with the terms of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988,[6] the Government of Luxembourg donates to UNDCP a portion of the revenues it receives from assets forfeited in drug trafficking/laundering cases. These funds are used for development-based initiatives in rural areas where illicit crops are grown, as a means of removing the economic dependence on drug crops. A Japanese non-governmental organization undertakes regular fund-raising campaigns with the public in Japan and provides between $400,000 and $500,000 per year to UNDCP for use exclusively in small grants to non-governmental organizations working on drug abuse prevention in developing countries.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.II.F.59.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.II.F.62.

[4] Mimeographed document presented to the Expert Group Meeting on "What have we learned one year into the emerging market countries financial crisis?", New York, 21-23 July 1998.

[5] Vienna, UNIDO, 1997.

[6] See *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

United Nations A/53/480

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 9
General debate

Letter dated 7 October 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am writing to you following the statement of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, His Excellency Dr. Mate Granic, in the general debate in the General Assembly on 28 September 1998. We noted with surprise that Croatia had abused the rostrum of the General Assembly to make a series of false and unfounded accusations against my country.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has lead a constructive policy towards Croatia in accordance with the Agreement on Normalization of Relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia of 1996 (A/51/318-S/1996/706, annex), in the implementation of which some significant results have been achieved. In doing so, the Yugoslav side has always proceeded from the primary responsibility that the two neighbouring countries have for peace and stability in the region. The achieved results have been manifested in a number of agreements signed between the two countries, the solution of some concrete questions, normalization of traffic and communications and the laying of foundations for economic and other forms of cooperation.

Proceeding from such responsibility for peace and stability in the region, as well as from the interest of the truth, I would like to draw your attention to certain parts of Dr. Granic's statement which present a distorted picture of the situation.

1. Foreign Minister Granic claims that a large number of the "Croatian" Serbs, some 45,000 of them, have returned to Croatia, characterizing the programme adopted by the Croatian Government for the purpose as very successful. In addition to not being true, this claim is disproved both by your report to the Security Council of 23 September 1998 (S/1998/887) and the Security Council press statement of 28 September 1998, in which the Croatian Government is censured for failing to take appropriate measures in this regard.

In his statement, Foreign Minister Granic makes no mention of the ongoing exodus of the Serbs from Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. Over 17,000 Serbs left the region after the departure of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. In your report, it is said that the "movement of

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both Serb displaced persons and the Serb population domiciled in the region to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and other countries has continued". Concern is also voiced that "no significant effort has been made by the Government to strengthen public confidence in the police"; that "the worrisome increase in violent ethnic incidents ... underscores the lack of effective Government action to discourage such crimes"; and that "follow-up by both the police and the courts to incidents of intimidation and harassment is still inadequate".

In his statement, Foreign Minister Granic is silent about the difficulties encountered by a small number of Serbs who have returned to Croatia. Many returnees have been maltreated, physically attacked, prevented from moving into their own houses and apartments, denied issuance of necessary documents and refused employment and loans. Your report goes on to say that "there has been almost no progress in the implementation of the Government's national reconciliation plan"; that "reconciliation committees are almost non-existent in areas of Serb returns"; that "some discriminatory legislation remains in force"; that "implementation of the convalidation law remains incomplete"; that the Government's commitments to the Joint Council of Municipalities are unfulfilled"; that "the Serb and minority communities ... continue to experience intimidation and more serious criminal acts as a result of property disputes and ethnic intolerance"; and that only "100 payments have been made so far" towards reconstruction assistance to Serbs.

2. As far as Prevlaka is concerned, the Yugoslav side is fully observant of article 4 of the Agreement on normalization of relations between the two countries, which provides that a solution to the disputed question should be found through negotiations. This position has been confirmed also in your report and in the resolution of the Security Council on this issue. The two sides have exchanged draft Agreements on the solution of that question and expert negotiations are currently under way. We have every right to expect that the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) be fully supported by the Security Council as long as the negotiations last. The announcement of Croatia that, if necessary, it will terminate the UNMOP mandate by unilateral action by 15 January 1999 is contrary to the Agreement on Normalization of Relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia and to the recommendations from your report.

3. I would like to assure you that the allegation to the effect that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to be the only successor of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are absolutely untrue and, as such, suggestive of wrong conclusions. On a number of occasions, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has said, loud and clear, that it detaches the question of political continuity from the question of the division of the assets and liabilities of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is committed to solving all disputed succession issues through negotiations within the Succession Group, with full respect for the principle of a fair division of the assets and liabilities of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia asks for no special status; what it does ask for is full respect for the principle of the contribution to the creation of common property.

4. Croatia has expressed its dissatisfaction with the work of the war crimes Tribunal. However, its representative has said nothing about the crimes committed by its authorities against innocent Serbian civilians in the operations of the Croatian military "Flash" and "Storm". Numerous serious crimes were perpetrated in those operations, which provoked a hurried exodus of hundreds of thousands of Serbs and, so far, no criminal charges have been brought against the perpetrators.

My Government cooperates with the Tribunal in accordance with its obligations from the Dayton/Paris Agreement. Pursuant to the Agreement between the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia and the United Nations, the Tribunal has opened a Liaison Office in Belgrade. It maintains full contact with the Yugoslav authorities and witnesses and is enabled unrestricted insight into documents of interest for the Tribunal.

5. Foreign Minister Granic raised the question of Kosovo and Metohija. He did so even though Croatia is hardly a country to pass judgements and counsel others on how to solve ethnic problems. Accusations of state terrorism are not based on facts and are totally unfounded. The policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is not the policy of terror, but of struggle against terrorism. All the activities of the security forces were directed against terrorists and their accessories, not against the civilian population and, upon their neutralization, the special police units have been withdrawn to the places of their permanent encampment. Moreover, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has done everything to relieve the consequences of terrorist activities.

No imminent humanitarian catastrophe threatens Kosovo and Metohija and the overall situation is improving. The number of temporarily displaced persons is continually decreasing, while the Governments of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have taken comprehensive measures to facilitate that trend. All returnees are guaranteed State protection and full amnesty, except those individuals who committed crimes. The Republic of Serbia has set up 15 humanitarian centres which dispose of large material resources rendering assistance and support to all those in need to start a normal life.

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija does not threaten peace and stability in neighbouring countries; rather, such a threat comes from Albania and those helping terrorists and their activities.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has fully complied with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998) and 1199 (1998) and is fully committed to solving all problems in Kosovo and Metohija by political means and through dialogue.

I would be grateful if you would kindly have this letter published as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Vladislav **Jovanović**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations A/53/481

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 140
Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/437) on the revised budget for the maintenance of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided the Committee with additional information and clarifications.

2. By its resolution 795 (1992) of 11 December 1992, the Security Council authorized the deployment of a United Nations presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. By its resolution 983 (1995) of 31 March 1995, the Security Council decided that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) within the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should be known as UNPREDEP. The Security Council, by its resolution 1142 (1997) of 4 December 1997, decided to extend the mandate of UNPREDEP for a final period terminating on 31 August 1998, with the withdrawal of the military component immediately thereafter.

3. The General Assembly, by its resolution 52/245 of 26 June 1998, appropriated the amount of $21,053,745 gross for the maintenance of UNPREDEP for the fiscal year 1998/99. It provided for a military strength of 750 troops for the period from 1 July to 31 August 1998 and the liquidation of UNPREDEP thereafter.

4. However, by its resolution 1186 (1998) of 21 July 1998, the Security Council extended the mandate of the Force until 28 February 1999 and decided to authorize an increase in its troop strength up to 1,050. The report of the Secretary-General (A/53/437) contains the revised budget for the maintenance of UNPREDEP at its increased military strength of 1,050 troops for the 12-month period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, which amounts to $55,492,545 gross, of which $32,438,800 gross represents the additional requirements resulting from the continuation of the mandate of UNPREDEP and the expansion of its military component. In the course of its examination of the revised budget for UNPREDEP, the Advisory Committee also took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the cost estimates for the maintenance of UNPREDEP for the financial period 1998/99 (A/52/805), which contains, *inter alia*, supplementary information on mission-specific costs and ratios, requirements for non-recurrent costs, an organizational chart and a map for UNPREDEP.

5. The revised budget provides for the deployment of 1,050 troops, 35 military observers and 26 civilian police. It also provides for 68 international staff and 135 locally recruited staff, the operation of up to 3 helicopters and 234

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United Nations-owned and 364 contingent-owned vehicles. According to the Secretary-General, the deployment of 1,050 troops, 35 military observers and 26 civilian police will be completed by November 1998; the deployment of 68 international staff and 135 locally recruited staff will be completed by January 1999. Annex IV to the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/437) contains the deployment schedule of military and civilian personnel.

6. In addition to the increase in troops from 750 to 1,050, the proposed staffing for the Force reflects a reduction of 4 posts in the category of international staff and an increase of 18 posts in the category of locally recruited staff, thus bringing the total number of the civilian component of UNPREDEP to the previous level of 203 posts. Details of the revised staff requirements are contained in paragraphs 14 to 26 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/437).

7. The Committee notes from paragraphs 15 and 25 of the same report that the Secretary-General proposes to upgrade the post of the Chief of the Civilian Engineering Section to the P-3 level and the post of the Chief Finance Officer to the P-4 level. The Committee was informed that these proposals reflect a reinstatement of the staffing levels that existed before the reduction in the military component of the Force took place. While, under the circumstances, the Committee has no objection to the proposed upgradings, it points out that requests for reclassification of posts should normally be made in the context of initial budgets.

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 18 of the report that one Field Service post for an Air Operations Manager is being proposed for the Movement Control/Air Operations Unit, in order to implement the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services that measures be taken to strengthen the capability of the Organization to assess the viability and suitability of a vendor, including safety records and compliance with international safety regulations. Although the Committee does not object to the proposal at the present time, it requests that the need for the functions of an Air Operations Manager be reviewed in the context of the next budget proposal for UNPREDEP, if any.

9. The Advisory Committee was informed that the deployment status of military and civilian personnel of UNPREDEP as at 31 August 1998 was as follows:

Category of personnel	*Authorized*	*Actual*	*Incumbency rate (percentage)*
Military observers	35	35	100
Military contingents	1 050	655	62
Civilian police	26	26	100
International staff	72	64	89
Local staff	117	102	87

10. As can be seen from the table above, the deployment of military contingents is only at the level of 62 per cent. In this connection, the Advisory Committee was informed that in respect of one battalion, a memorandum of understanding had not been signed as at 29 September 1998. Taking into account the above statistics, as well as historical data on troop deployment, the Advisory Committee is doubtful whether the deployment schedule referred to in paragraph 5 above could be fully implemented.

11. The Committee was informed that full reimbursement for troops has been made to troop-contributing countries for the period ending 31 December 1997 and that an amount of $6.5 million is owed to troop-contributing countries for the period ending 31 August 1998.

12. The Advisory Committee was also informed that expenditures for the fiscal year 1997/98 amounted to $39.6 million gross, resulting in an unencumbered balance of $6.9 million; moreover, the expenditures of $39.6 million include unliquidated obligations of about $14.4 million. The Committee points out that some of the unliquidated obligation may well be cancelled, which would further increase the unencumbered balance for the financial period 1997/98. The Committee is of the view that additional efforts need to be taken to improve the reliability of budget estimates for UNPREDEP. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in the course of its consideration of the performance report for UNPREDEP for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997, the Committee observed that the Secretary-General's initial budget estimates for UNPREDEP for that period appear to have been inflated (see A/52/860/Add.1, para. 5).

13. The Advisory Committee was informed that out of the total estimated requirements of $34.4 million for the reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment from the inception of UNPREDEP (1 January 1996) to 30 June 1999, an amount of $3.0 million has been reimbursed to troop-contributing countries. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that in paragraphs 9 to 12 of its previous report on the financing of UNPREDEP during the financial period 1998/99 (A/52/860/Add.1), the Committee made a

number of observations and recommendations. For example, the Committee noted that the requirements for reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment were based on the retroactive application of the new wet-lease arrangements to the inception of UNPREDEP on 1 January 1996 (ibid., para. 9). Moreover, the Committee observed that, "at this stage the capacity of the Organization to implement the new contingent-owned equipment arrangements and to benefit from them is deficient" and it recommended, therefore, that "the Secretary-General take all necessary measures adequately to review projected requirements for reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment under the new wet-lease arrangements, including an immediate special audit by the Board of Auditors on this issue, which would, *inter alia*, address arrangements in place for application of the new contingent-owned equipment procedures" (ibid., para. 10). The Advisory Committee also pointed out that it is important that "the Secretary-General clarify and confirm that reimbursement under the new wet-lease arrangements with troop-contributing Governments does not include provisions for support and services already provided by the United Nations to military personnel" (ibid., para. 12). The Advisory Committee points out that the above observations and recommendations still need to be addressed by the Secretary-General.

14. The Secretary-General, in paragraph 27 of his report (A/53/437), proposes that the General Assembly appropriate $34.4 million gross for the maintenance and liquidation of UNPREDEP during the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, in addition to the amount of $21.0 million gross already appropriated and assessed under General Assembly resolution 52/245. Taking into account its comments and observations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate an amount of $29.0 million gross for a total amount of $50.0 million gross for the Force for the financial period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. The assessment of the additional amount of $29.0 million gross would be subject to the renewal of the mandate of UNPREDEP by the Security Council for the period beyond 28 February 1999.

United Nations A/53/482

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 106
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Protection of children affected by armed conflict

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly, in accordance with Assembly resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996, the report prepared by Mr. Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

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Annex

Protection of children affected by armed conflict

Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to section II of General Assembly resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996, by which the Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to submit to it an annual report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict.

2. Since the World Summit for Children, in 1990, the United Nations has increasingly sought to draw international attention to the horrendous plight of children affected by armed conflict. In 1993, following a recommendation by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993, recommending that the Secretary-General appoint an independent expert to study the impact of armed conflict on children. Ms. Graça Machel, former Minister of Education of Mozambique, was appointed the expert of the Secretary-General, charged with the task of undertaking the study with the special support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. In 1996, following two years of extensive research, consultations and field visits, Ms. Machel submitted her report, entitled "Impact of armed conflict on children" (A/51/306 and Add.1), to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

3. In response to the Machel report, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/77, in which it recommended that the Secretary-General appoint for a period of three years a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children. The Assembly also called upon States and institutions concerned to provide voluntary contributions in support of the work of the Special Representative.

4. The Secretary-General appointed Mr. Olara A. Otunnu as his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in September 1997. In announcing the appointment, the Secretary-General underscored the urgent need for a public advocate and moral voice on behalf of children whose rights and welfare have been and are being violated in the context of armed conflict.

5. The Special Representative should like to pay a special tribute to Ms. Graça Machel for her ground-breaking work and singular contribution to promoting the rights and protection of children victimized by armed conflict. Her report provided the first comprehensive and most compelling assessment of the multiple ways in which children are abused and brutalized in the context of armed conflict. The Special Representative feels particularly honoured to follow in Ms. Machel's footsteps and to build on the strong foundation she has built.

II. Children affected by armed conflict: the context

6. As the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations emphasizes, our first duty is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". In this we have failed profoundly. Not only are millions of children still the victims of war, far too often they are its principal targets and even its instruments. At this moment, in approximately 50 countries around the world, children are suffering from the effects of conflict and its aftermath.

7. For all the children deliberately massacred or caught in crossfire or maimed by anti-personnel landmines, many more have been deprived of their physical, mental and emotional needs in societies at war. Millions have lost their homes and their parents, not to mention years of education and their youth. Some have been permanently traumatized by the events they have witnessed and experienced. In today's internecine conflicts, children are specifically targeted in strategies to eliminate the next generation of potential adversaries. To the same end, children, and especially girls, have been made the targets of sexual abuse and gender-based violence on a large scale. Most cynically, children have been compelled to become instruments of war, recruited or kidnapped to become child soldiers, thus forced to give violent expression to the hatreds of adults. In all, an estimated 2 million children have been killed in situations of armed conflict since 1987, while three times that number have been seriously injured or permanently disabled.

8. This brutal reality has been exacerbated by a qualitative change in the nature and scope of conflict in recent times. Today's conflicts are primarily internal, often fought by multiple, semi-autonomous armed groups within existing State boundaries. The international rules of warfare, governing Inter-State wars fought by regular armies, are routinely ignored in these situations of "total war". Often protracted, such conflicts expose successive generations of children to horrendous violence.

9. Against a backdrop of increasingly accessible and destructive conventional weapons, many of these conflicts pit compatriot against compatriot, neighbour against neighbour. They are often characterized by the demonization of the "enemy community" and the orchestration of vicious hate campaigns. In today's internecine warfare, the village

has become the battlefield and civilian populations the primary target. In the First World War, civilians accounted for some 5 per cent of casualties. In the Second World War, that figure rose to 48 per cent. Today, up to 90 per cent of conflict casualties around the world are civilians, a large and increasing number of these are children and women. This is the world upside down.

10. At the heart of this growing phenomenon of mass violence and social disintegration is a crisis of values. Perhaps the most fundamental loss a society can suffer is the collapse of its own value system. Many societies exposed to protracted conflicts have seen their community values radically undermined if not shattered altogether. This has given rise to an "ethical vacuum", a setting in which international standards are ignored with impunity and where local value systems have lost their sway.

11. Children represent the future of human civilization and the future of every society. To permit them to be used as pawns in warfare, whether as targets or perpetrators, is to cast a shadow on the future. From generation to generation, violence begets violence, as the abused grow up to become abusers. Children who are thus violated carry the scars of fear and hatred in their hearts and minds. Forced to learn to kill instead of pursuing education, the children of conflict lack the knowledge and skills needed to build their own futures and the futures of their communities. For society, the lives destroyed and the opportunities lost can have devastating effects on its long-term stability and development.

12. The international community has an obligation to be concerned about the protection of all non-combatants caught in the midst of violent conflicts. Yet there is an urgent need to focus special attention on the plight of children. They are the ones least responsible for conflict, yet most vulnerable to its excesses. Children, as the most innocent and powerless victims of armed conflict, require special protection. In zones of conflict, international advocacy and intercession are essential to ensure that parties to conflict commit themselves to the protection of children from exploitation, abuse and brutalization. The international community must ensure that those who target children do not continue to do so with impunity.

III. Main objectives: promoting prevention, protection and rehabilitation

13. A serious and systematic effort by all concerned parties – from Governments to the United Nations system to civil society organizations to private citizens – is needed to address the abominations being committed against children in the context of armed conflict. As an advocate on behalf of these children, the Special Representative is working to spearhead that effort. He is seeking to combine normative, political and humanitarian strategies in efforts to promote prevention, protection and rehabilitation for the benefit of children. In this context, the Special Representative is developing the following major activities.

A. Protection through public advocacy

14. The Special Representative is to give a public voice to children who have been victimized by the chaos, cruelty and lawlessness that characterize contemporary armed conflicts. He is working to raise greater public and official awareness of international instruments and local norms that provide for the rights, protection and welfare of children, even as he highlights the horrific impact of ongoing conflicts on them. His role is to be a public advocate and a voice for prevention, protection and rehabilitation. The Special Representative seeks to draw official and public attention to the abominations being committed against children, and to mobilize action through a range of activities, including field visits, the engagement of concerned Governments and civil organizations, media outreach, addressing opinion leaders, and other awareness-raising strategies.

B. Promoting concrete initiatives in the midst of ongoing conflicts

15. In situations of active violence where the security and well-being of children are seriously endangered, the Special Representative undertakes political and humanitarian diplomacy, proposing concrete initiatives to prevent or mitigate the suffering of children. He, in effect, serves as a facilitator and a resource for the agencies and bodies that operate on the ground. He works with them, for example, to unblock difficult political situations and to seek access to civilian populations in distress, the worst affected of whom are always children and women. This sensitive political role requires close coordination with partners within and outside

the United Nations community, especially the relief and humanitarian organizations whose work on the ground would be facilitated by such initiatives.

C. Mobilizing concerted response to post-conflict needs

16. In countries that are emerging from conflict, the Special Representative is highlighting the needs of children and women whose lives have been shattered by war. Cessation of hostilities does not mean that war is over, particularly for children who have been extensively exposed to the culture of violence. Only with a systematic programme of healing and reintegration into society can the cycle of violence be broken. The healing and rehabilitation needs of children should, therefore, constitute a central theme and not an afterthought of post-conflict peace-building programmes. The Special Representative is working to promote this concern with agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations. Some of the issues and needs that should be addressed in a collaborative manner include: prioritization of child rights within the terms of peace accords and in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, the demobilization of child soldiers and their social reintegration, the return and reintegration of displaced and refugee children, mine-clearance and mine-awareness programmes, psychological recovery, educational and vocational training, and issues of juvenile justice. Promotion of compliance with international standards and re-establishment of local norms that promote child protection and welfare also merit priority attention.

IV. Working on selected themes

17. The Machel report highlighted a wide range of important issues affecting the rights and welfare of children in the context of armed conflict. Given the breadth of this agenda and practical constraints, there is a need to select some areas for concentration of efforts. The following are the key issues for which a strong advocacy role by the Special Representative will have particular added value and to which he is giving priority attention at this stage. In each of these areas, there are a number of organizations with considerable experience in the development and implementation of programme activities in conflict or post-conflict situations. The Special Representative will use his mandate to complement their efforts and highlight common concerns. Their experience and initiatives will be invaluable to his own work of advocacy and mobilization of support for children, especially in promoting increased attention in political circles to the cause of children.

A. Participation of children in armed conflict

18. Children simply have no role in warfare. The Special Representative is seizing every available opportunity and forum to underscore this fundamental principle.

19. An alarming trend in recent years is the increasing participation, direct and indirect, of children in armed conflict. It is estimated that up to 300,000 children under the age of 18 are serving as combatants in government armed forces or armed opposition groups in ongoing conflicts. Indeed, the development and proliferation of lightweight automatic weapons has made it possible for very young children to bear and use arms. Many more are being used in indirect ways that are more difficult to measure, such as cooks, messengers and porters. Children have also been used for mine clearance, spying and suicide bombing.

20. The Special Representative is working to mobilize public opinion and political pressure against this terrible trend. In particular, he is advocating stronger and more concerted action against the military recruitment of children under the agreed age limit. In this connection, the Special Representative strongly advocated the designation of the recruitment of children under 15 and their participation in hostilities as a war crime in the deliberations for the establishing of a permanent International Criminal Court; he welcomes its inclusion in the Statute of the Court.

21. The Special Representative strongly supports current efforts to raise the legal age for recruitment and participation in hostilities to 18 years, through the adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this connection, he recently held a meeting with the new Chairperson of the Working Group on the Optional Protocol; together they have agreed to pursue a common course of collaboration and advocacy on this issue.

22. The Special Representative is also drawing attention to the various political and socio-economic conditions that often facilitate the recruitment and participation of children in armed conflict. He is also urging more effective response to the needs of child combatants in post-conflict situations.

B. Taking norms and values seriously

23. The abominations that are currently being visited upon children in so many theatres of conflict around the world are

due in large measure to a normative crisis at both the international and local levels. The traditional limits on the conduct of warfare – international instruments as well as local injunctions and taboos – are being cast aside. Clearly, the development and codification of these global and local norms is only the first step. To be meaningful, they must be respected and applied. The immense effort involved in the creation of international instruments and standards comes to naught if adoption is not followed by application. Similarly, the rich well of history and traditions from which local values spring means little if those norms are discarded when most needed. In his work, the Special Representative stresses the need to turn principle into practice, reminding all parties concerned, including non-State actors, that international and local standards of conduct should be resurrected and respected, in order to prevent the abuse and brutalization of children.

24. *International norms*. Over the past 50 years, the countries of the world have developed and ratified an impressive series of international human rights and humanitarian instruments. Several of these address the rights, protection and welfare of children. The most pertinent are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Geneva Conventions (1949), along with their Additional Protocols. The latter contain some 25 articles specifically pertaining to children. Protocol I stipulates that children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of assault during conflict. Article 3, common to all four Conventions, is the cornerstone for the protection of civilians in internal conflicts and is binding on all parties to a conflict, regardless of their relationship to the State. Its fundamental guarantees are supplemented by Protocol II. Article 4.3 of Protocol II is devoted exclusively to children, enjoining that they "be provided with the care and aid they require".

25. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most universally ratified international instrument, calls for the protection of children's right to life, education, health and other fundamental needs. These provisions apply equally in times of armed conflict and in times of peace. However, the value of these provisions is limited to the extent to which they are applied. Words on paper cannot save children in peril.

26. The Special Representative has followed with great interest the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in particular when it considers reports on countries in which children are affected by armed conflict. The Committee deserves particular recognition for its monitoring role in relation to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. He calls on States party to the Convention to cooperate fully with the Committee, and supports efforts to increase its membership, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Committee to better respond to an increasing workload.

27. *Local value systems*. In addition to international instruments, all societies can draw on their own local value systems, including a normative order governing civic relations and the conduct of war. Societies throughout history have recognized the special obligation to protect children from harm.

28. Increasingly, however, especially during periods of protracted conflict, we are witnessing a breakdown of traditional norms and social codes of behaviour, with horrendous consequences for the civilian population. In the resulting "ethical vacuum" anything goes. Distinctions between civilians and combatants have broken down. Children, women and the elderly have all become fair game in the single-minded struggle for power.

29. In such situations, the Special Representative encourages the revival of critically important local value systems, values that promote the rights, protection and welfare of children. In particular, the role of institutions and community structures that normally provide a sense of ethical rootedness, such as parents, extended families, elders, teachers, schools and religious institutions, should be supported and strengthened.

30. *The International Criminal Court*. The concern of the Special Representative during the deliberations for the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court was to ensure that "the best interest" of, and "maximum protection" for children affected by armed conflict should serve as guiding principles in the drafting of the statute for a permanent International Criminal Court. He consulted extensively with various delegations and relevant non-governmental organizations in preparation for the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries, which was held in Rome in the summer of 1998. In particular, he called for the following:

(a) Recruitment into armed forces or groups of children below the legal minimum age for recruitment should be defined as a war crime;

(b) Targeting of buildings or sites that usually have a significant presence of children, such as schools and hospitals, should be defined as a war crime;

(c) Rape and other forms of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict should be defined as a war crime, with provision for the severest punishment.

The Special Representative is encouraged that the Statute of the International Criminal Court has given expression to most of the issues of concern to his mandate.

31. The establishment of the International Criminal Court is of considerable significance for the cause of children. It is a powerful tool that considerably reinforces advocacy for children targeted in the midst of conflict, in criminalizing specific acts of violence against children that have been, until now, purely within the category of obligations of States parties to international human rights treaties and international humanitarian law.

C. Rape and sexual abuse in the context of armed conflict

32. The Special Representative called for the criminalization under the Statute of the International Criminal Court of rape and other forms of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict. The breakdown of the social fabric and the disintegration of families at times of armed conflict often leaves women and girls especially vulnerable to sexual violence. He is particularly encouraged that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or any other form of violence of comparable gravity have been defined as crimes against humanity in the Statute. This achievement is sending a strong warning to combatants that rape and sexual abuse can no longer be perpetrated with impunity in times of armed conflict, and that combatants are now liable for prosecution for their individual actions.

33. Children affected by gender-based violence also include those who have witnessed the rape of a family member. The Special Representative is seeking to raise greater awareness of this issue, and to promote the need for the provision of special health and psychological care for victims within post-conflict rehabilitation programmes. Given the current paucity of analysis and research on sexual abuse and gender-based violence in the context of armed conflict, the Special Representative is actively promoting more systematic research on this problem.

D. Mine awareness and rehabilitation of child victims

34. Civilians, including children, are exposed to the danger of approximately 100 million landmines left buried in more than 68 countries. It is estimated that anti-personnel landmines kill or maim about 26,000 persons a year, and approximately 800 children are killed or maimed by landmines every month. Millions of various unexploded ordnance also represent additional hazards.

35. In December 1997, 122 countries signed, in Ottawa, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on their Destruction, which was a milestone achievement for the international community. The rapid ratification of the treaty by over 40 countries is a notable accomplishment that will assure that the treaty will enter into force early in 1999 and that attention can now be given to its effective implementation. In the immediate term, the Special Representative is emphasizing the child dimension, especially the need for more rapid progress in mine clearance, greater support for mine-awareness programmes for children and rehabilitation programmes to help child victims. He is working with key partners to address these concerns, especially in post-conflict situations.

E. Displaced children

36. In all of his country visits, from Sierra Leone to Yugoslavia, the Special Representative has been moved by the particularly precarious conditions of displaced populations. This is a matter of deep concern for the Special Representative. Children constitute well over 50 per cent of the 24 million people who are either refugees beyond their national borders or internally displaced persons within their own countries. He has called upon Governments and other authorities to meet their obligations regarding the protection of refugee and internally displaced children. In September 1998, he addressed the thirteenth session of the UNHCR Standing Committee during its review of UNHCR follow-up activities to the Machel report. The Special Representative supports the enhanced focus of UNHCR on refugee children. UNHCR and the Special Representative have agreed to work closely to promote the protection of refugee and internally displaced children.

37. The Special Representative has been in contact with Mr. Francis Deng, Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons; they will be working in close collaboration on the protection of the large number of children displaced within their own countries.

F. Impact of small arms on children

38. There is a strong link between the accessibility of small arms and the victimization of children. The

proliferation of these weapons has made it possible for very young children to be perpetrators of violence. The Special Representative, together with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, supports instituting controls for the transfer of arms to conflict zones, especially where children and women are being abused and brutalized. He places importance on demobilizing child soldiers and reintegrating them into society. The Special Representative also supports the recommendations of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms to develop guidelines for disarming combatants with respect to small arms, light weapons and ammunition, as well as their suggestions for collection and disposal of those weapons. He intends to place priority on advocacy for, and support of, assessments of the impact of the availability of small arms on child morbidity and mortality, following the pioneering work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in several countries in assessing the impact of such weapons on civilian casualties.

G. Impact of sanctions on children

39. In the light of concerns expressed in the Machel report and other recent reports about the ill-effects of sanctions regimes on children, the Special Representative seeks to work closely with the Security Council, Governments, non-governmental organizations and relevant United Nations agencies and bodies to explore preventive measures, such as child-focused humanitarian exemptions, child impact assessments and more targeted sanctions regimes. In addition, he is exploring more effective ways to ensure their recovery from the adverse effects of sanctions. He endorses the inter-agency analysis, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, of the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

H. Incorporating standards into United Nations operations

40. The United Nations and its agencies, particularly those with operational activities in the field, are important channels for building greater awareness and encouraging more consistent application of human rights and humanitarian norms to protect children affected by armed conflict. In order to achieve this, United Nations agencies and bodies should be encouraged to more systematically integrate these standards into their policies, procedures and operations, providing guidelines and training to their personnel whenever necessary, as well as setting the best example through their own conduct. This pertains to all United Nations personnel, civilian and military. The Special Representative applauds existing efforts in this regard and encourages all United Nations bodies to further build into their internal cultures and operational activities greater awareness of and sensitivity to the rights, protection and welfare of children in the context of armed conflict.

V. Field missions and country initiatives for children

41. From Sierra Leone to Tajikistan, from Liberia to Cambodia, from the Sudan to Kosovo, from Sri Lanka to Afghanistan, millions of children are being robbed of their childhood and left with mangled lives.

42. The Special Representative has made special efforts to seek improvements in the situation of children in countries affected by conflict. The list of such countries is large, numbering approximately 50, comprising those in the midst of conflict as well as in post-conflict recovery. During his term, the Special Representative seeks to visit a number of affected countries in order to assess first-hand the situation of children, obtain commitments for child protection from parties to conflict and heighten public awareness of their desperate plight. He intends to lend his support to the negotiation of humanitarian space for children and other civilian victims of armed conflict, so as to facilitate coordinated actions by local and international actors to improve the protection and welfare of children.

43. Since his appointment, the Special Representative has personally visited the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and the Sudan. His office has also conducted two assessment missions to Afghanistan. In his field visits to countries affected by conflict, the Special Representative has relied upon the invaluable partnership and support of several United Nations agencies, especially UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) and a number of non-governmental organizations.

44. During these visits, the Special Representative has met with government officials as well as representatives of United Nations agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society. In his discussions with Governments and all parties to conflict, the Special Representative stresses the humanitarian character of his missions. He emphasized his

concern for all dimensions of the impact of conflict on children, and underscored his preoccupation with the fate of all victimized children, regardless of their ethnic, religious or political affiliations, or the source of their victimization. In several cases, the discussions resulted in a number of important commitments concerning, for example, assurance of access to humanitarian aid for affected populations, cessation of the recruitment and participation of children in hostilities, use of landmines and targeting of civilian populations. Country-specific commitments are specified below.

A. Afghanistan

45. The Special Representative has been exploring ways to promote the protection and welfare of children affected by the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

46. During two assessment visits by the office of the Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, in January and March 1998, the following main problems affecting children were identified: severe poverty, which is manifested in multiple ways such as street children and children being recruited for military purposes; lack of access to education and health services; discriminatory practices against girls; physical disabilities owing to mine casualties and non-existent or poor health-care facilities; and psychological trauma. In the complex humanitarian emergency situation that prevails in Afghanistan, children and women suffer doubly: from the devastations of the ongoing war, compounded by difficulties of the humanitarian assistance community in providing protection and relief to those affected by it, owing to continuing insecurity, official discrimination against girls and women and inadequate resources.

47. The office of the Special Representative has identified the following types of initiatives to guide future efforts:

(a) Improving children's access to humanitarian assistance, including non-life-saving assistance such as education;

(b) Encouraging donors and implementing partners to prioritize assistance programmes and provide a coordinated response, in the context of the strategic framework for Afghanistan that is being developed by the United Nations; key areas of assistance include emergency food and health care, education, mine clearance and awareness, drug control, creation of employment opportunities and support for displaced persons and their voluntary repatriation;

(c) Highlighting the plight of children affected by war in Afghanistan as part of an effort to mobilize domestic and international pressure on Afghan parties and involved Governments to, at the minimum, desist from violating children and, ideally, to undertake meaningful efforts at finding a peaceful solution to the conflict;

(d) Advocacy with Afghan political groups and Governments of neighbouring countries to ensure that children are not recruited for military purposes.

48. In support of these efforts, the office of the Special Representative has initiated contacts with key actors in the international assistance community in Afghanistan, including representatives of donor countries, United Nations agencies, ICRC and non-governmental organizations. Contacts have also been established with various local non-governmental organizations in Pakistan. These groups can provide ongoing monitoring of and insights into the situation of children in Afghanistan, as part of an effort to focus public attention on the importance of protection and welfare of children.

B. Liberia

49. The Special Representative visited Liberia from 11 to 13 March 1998 to assess the situation of children after a period of protracted civil war in the country. During his visit, the Special Representative met with several senior officials, including the Ministers for Health, Education and Justice, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Social Welfare, the Chief Justice, heads of United Nations agencies and representatives of local and international non-governmental organizations.

50. The protracted period of conflict has had a devastating effect on the children of Liberia, many of whom have known no other way of life. A serious erosion of local value systems has also taken place. The Special Representative was, however, encouraged by the climate of United Nations inter-agency cooperation on issues of child rights, particularly in the sectors of education and health, where UNDP provides the physical infrastructure, UNICEF the materials, WFP the food and entities such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) the medical assistance. The activities of non-governmental organizations in areas such as family reunification, demobilization, vocational training for war-affected youth, health and education, and the presence of an active and well-organized civil society in Liberia, are further promising signs.

51. The categories of children identified as having special protection needs include ex-combatant youth, refugee and internally displaced children, sexually abused girls and unaccompanied and street children. The following were identified as the key challenges requiring initiatives:

(a) Empowering families, economically and socially, to resume their roles in bringing up and supporting children, thus moving away from a policy of heavy dependence on institutional care. At present, many unaccompanied, displaced and orphaned children are resident either on the streets or in orphanages, many of which are of dubious quality;

(b) Carefully assessing and accrediting existing institutions such as orphanages;

(c) Improving educational opportunities through reduced school fees, better infrastructure and reading materials and improving salaries for teachers. Currently, teachers in rural areas in particular are usually unpaid, or paid only in food;

(d) Revitalizing primary health care, particularly through the revival of rural clinics. In this regard, too, local civil society and non-governmental organizations should be strengthened to enable them to become effective implementing partners. A major child health issue is the need to promote adolescent reproductive health awareness and practice;

(e) It is vital to dedicate a larger proportion of the national budget to the revitalization of social services, in particular health and education. Currently, the Government spends approximately 60 per cent of the budget on security, while 7 per cent is spent on health and 4 per cent on education;

(f) Improving the juvenile justice system, particularly by complementing the newly created juvenile court with facilities for the separate pre-trial detention and post-trial incarceration (if necessary) of minors, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. ICRC is currently involved in assisting the Ministry of Justice on this matter;

(g) Training for income-generating activities for all children affected by war, without differentiating between former combatants and those who were involved in conflict in other ways;

(h) Reviving local values and support systems, such as the role of the traditional *Sande* and *Poro* "bush" schools, which is a traditional system in rural communities to inculcate local ethics in children;

(i) Supporting local advocacy efforts, by encouraging the formation of a group of local eminent persons willing to act as advocates for children in Liberia and by instituting a radio station to promote issues related to the interests and rights of children.

C. Sierra Leone

52. The Special Representative visited Sierra Leone on 10 and 11 March 1998, at the invitation of the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on the occasion of the restoration to office of the President of Sierra Leone, Mr. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The Special Representative was received by the President of Sierra Leone, and met with several other leaders from ECOWAS countries and the leadership of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) during the visit.

53. The Special Representative undertook a second, more extended, visit to Sierra Leone on 26 to 29 May 1998. He was received by the President, met with the Commander of ECOMOG, the National Coordinator of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) (known as Kamajors), the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Information and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He also held discussions with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the heads of various United Nations entities, especially UNDP and UNICEF, the Child Protection Committee, the Inter-Religious Council, parliamentarians and international and local non-governmental organizations.

54. The Special Representative travelled to the eastern region of Sierra Leone, visiting the towns of Daru, Segbwema and Kenema, close to the areas where active fighting is still going on with the remnants of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). He also met with the regional commanders of ECOMOG and the regional leaders of CDF (Kamajors). He had the opportunity to witness for himself the terrible plight of internally displaced people, including hundreds of unaccompanied children who had recently emerged from the bush.

55. Throughout his visit and in all his discussions, it became clear that one of the most pressing challenges facing Sierra Leone at the present time was the "crisis of the young" – the plight of children affected directly and indirectly by the conflict. There are many serious manifestations of the impact of the prolonged conflict on children, such as street children, child combatants, displaced

children, unaccompanied children, and victims of atrocities, as well as the collapse of health and education services. It was also striking that so many people expressed their alarm at the rapid erosion of local value systems within the society, especially among the youth.

56. The Special Representative identified five areas requiring urgent action by the international community: (a) demobilization and reintegration of child combatants; (b) resettlement of internally displaced persons; (c) tracing of families of unaccompanied children; (d) rehabilitation and support of victims without limbs; and (e) provision and rehabilitation of medical and educational services. He appealed for urgent international assistance specifically targeted to the victims of the recent atrocities, especially those who have lost their limbs. Approximately 300 victims of reprisals by AFRC and RUF fighters had been treated during a period of one month (May 1998) at Connaught Hospital in Freetown; this is estimated to constitute only a small proportion of those who have been maimed by the atrocities. The number of victims reporting to up-country hospitals is still unknown, and a larger number of people are reported to have died or are still suffering in the bush.

57. The Special Representative also appealed for an immediate response to the needs of children in the eastern region, many of whom are unaccompanied and whose parents have either been killed, captured or have fled. Most reports indicated that more children were still hiding in the bush. Immediate relief supplies of food, medicine and clothing were needed to meet the basic needs of those children.

58. In discussions with government leaders, the leadership of ECOMOG and the leadership of CDF (Kamajors), the Special Representative raised several specific issues. These discussions resulted in a number of important commitments, including the following:

(a) *Recruitment and demobilization of children.* CDF (Kamajors) agreed to stop the recruitment and initiation of children under the age of 18, and to begin the process of demobilization of child combatants currently within their ranks;

(b) *Treatment of AFRC and RUF child combatants.* Both ECOMOG and CDF (Kamajors) agreed to provide special protection to AFRC and RUF child combatants who came into their custody through surrender, capture or escape. There have been recent incidents of on-the-spot reprisals against such children;

(c) *Joint task force for demobilization of child combatants.* It was agreed that a joint task force should be constituted, comprising senior representatives from ECOMOG, CDF (Kamajors), the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and international humanitarian agencies, in order to establish and oversee a systematic procedure for demobilization and reintegration of child combatants;

(d) *Recruitment and training of a new national army.* The Government announced plans for the establishment of a new national army. The recruitment and training of the new army were entrusted to ECOMOG. In this context, the Government agreed to set an example by not recruiting children under the age of 18. The Government and ECOMOG also agreed to receive assistance from United Nations agencies in providing training materials on humanitarian and human rights standards concerning the protection of civilians, particularly women and children;

(e) *Establishment of a coordination group.* In order to realize a more coordinated and effective national response to the needs of children affected by conflict, President Kabbah directed that a group be established, consisting of relevant government ministries, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, to propose and coordinate actions in this area. Discussions were under way on the establishment of the group;

(f) *Parliamentarian caucus for children.* Following their discussion with the Special Representative, an all-party group of parliamentarians constituted a caucus to serve as parliamentary advocates for the rights, protection and welfare of children affected by conflict in Sierra Leone.

59. At the conclusion of his visit, the Special Representative urged the international community to make the rehabilitation of the children of Sierra Leone a pilot project for post-conflict reconstruction. He noted that while the challenge of children in Sierra Leone was serious, it was not overwhelming. The situation could be turned around with carefully organized and targeted assistance. Providing new hope for the children of Sierra Leone may well be the best way to ensure national recovery for the country as a whole. In this regard, he challenged the international community to respond in a more vigorous and concerted fashion to the needs of children affected by the conflict, and warned that the restored democracy as well as prospects for stability could be seriously jeopardized if the international community adopted a wait-and-see attitude on Sierra Leone. He also commended the positive role and example of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, and called on the international community to provide greater financial and logistical support for ECOMOG to facilitate its tasks in Sierra Leone.

60. The Special Representative conveyed the call for making the situation of children in Sierra Leone a pilot case, and the need to provide assistance to ECOMOG was conveyed to Governments, partners within the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. He has been encouraged by the support those proposals have received, notably within the European Union, at the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and at the special conference on Sierra Leone held in New York on 30 June 1998.

D. Sri Lanka

61. The Special Representative visited Sri Lanka from 3 to 9 May 1998 to witness and assess the multiple ways in which children are affected by the ongoing armed conflict in that country. He was received by the President, Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Minister for Justice, Constitutional Affairs, National Integration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr. G. L. Peiris, parliamentarians and other government officials. He travelled to affected areas in the Jaffna peninsula and the Vanni region, where he visited schools, resettlement villages and centres for internally displaced persons. While in those areas, he also met with local government officials, military commanders and religious and civic leaders, as well as with representatives of local and international humanitarian agencies. He had the opportunity to meet with two senior representatives appointed by the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), V. Prabhakaran, Mr. Thamilselvan, Head of the Political Section, and Mr. Balasingham, Political Adviser.

62. In his discussions with the Government and the LTTE leadership, the Special Representative raised several issues pertaining to the rights, protection and welfare of children, and obtained the following specific commitments from the parties.

63. *Provision and distribution of humanitarian supplies.* Efforts were being made to respond to the humanitarian situation in affected areas, but more needed to be done to meet the critical and growing needs of the affected populations. The Government agreed to review the list of restricted items and to examine procedures to expedite the approval and distribution of necessary supplies. The LTTE leadership made a commitment not to interfere with the flow of humanitarian supplies destined for affected populations and accepted the need for a framework to monitor this commitment.

64. *Free movement of displaced populations.* The Government agreed to expedite procedures for the issue of permits for movement in affected areas. The LTTE leadership made the commitment that the movement of displaced populations who wanted to return to areas now under government control would not be impeded. They also pledged not to impede the return to their homes of Muslim populations displaced by previous outbreaks of hostilities and they accepted that a framework to monitor those processes should be put in place.

65. *Recruitment and participation of children in hostilities.* The LTTE leadership undertook not to use children below 18 years of age in combat and not to recruit children less than 17 years old. They also accepted a proposal to create a framework to monitor those commitments. The Government of Sri Lanka reiterated its commitment to the policy of not recruiting children under the age of 18 years. The Special Representative welcomed government assurances that there were no plans to embark on a recruitment drive in schools.

66. *Observing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.* The Government of Sri Lanka has signed and ratified the Convention. It has also prepared a National Children's Charter. The Special Representative stressed the importance for all parties, including non-state actors, to respect the principles and provisions of the Convention. In this connection, he urged the LTTE leadership to make a public commitment to respect the Convention. He was encouraged by the LTTE readiness to have its cadres receive information and instruction on the Convention.

67. *Targeting of civilian populations and sites.* The Special Representative expressed the gravest concern about the targeting of civilian populations and sites throughout the country. The LTTE leadership acknowledged this to be an important and legitimate concern and undertook to review its strategies and tactics in this regard.

68. Another important issue that the Special Representative raised with the Government and with the LTTE leadership was the continuing use of landmines by both sides. He very much regretted that it had not been possible on this occasion to obtain a commitment from either party to refrain from using landmines; he indicated his intention to pursue this issue.

69. During his travel to the conflict-affected areas, the Special Representative witnessed the trauma and distress on the part of affected populations there. He saw how the protracted conflict has undermined the social and ethical fabric of society, and was struck by the deep and widespread yearning for peace on the part of all communities. At a final

address in Colombo, he strongly endorsed the launching of a UNICEF-sponsored local initiative, proclaiming "children as zones of peace", as a systematic effort to apply global recommendations on the protection, rights and welfare of children to the specific context of Sri Lanka.

70. The Special Representative welcomed the commitments made by the Government of Sri Lanka and the leadership of LTTE, which represented a significant development towards ensuring the protection, rights and welfare of children affected by the ongoing armed conflict in Sri Lanka. He called upon the Government and LTTE to take concrete steps to fulfil their respective commitments, and launched a strong appeal to the international community to provide more assistance to conflict-affected populations in Sri Lanka, especially for resettlement and the meeting of their urgent health and education needs.

E. Sudan

71. The Special Representative visited the Sudan from 14 to 17 June 1998 with two objectives: (a) to assess first-hand the impact on children of the protracted conflict in the Sudan, and (b) to seek the support of the Government of the Sudan in locating and facilitating the release of children abducted from northern Uganda.

72. During his visit, he met with government leaders, including First Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha; the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hassan Abdalla Al Turabi; the Minister of External Relations, Mustafa Osman Ismail; the Chairman of the Southern States Coordinating Council, Riak Machar; heads of United Nations agencies and international and local non-governmental organizations; and representatives of civil society. He also travelled to the southern city of Juba, where he visited camps for internally displaced populations.

73. Regarding his second objective, the Special Representative expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Sudan for facilitating the release, during his visit, of three Ugandan children who had been abducted from northern Uganda by Ugandan rebel groups. The three children were transported from the southern city of Juba to Khartoum, where they were placed in the care of UNICEF and UNHCR, before being repatriated to Uganda.

74. The Sudanese Government made a pledge to assist with the ongoing efforts of the Special Representative to obtain the release of other children who have also been abducted from northern Uganda. In this regard, the Special Representative especially requested the Sudanese Government to use its influence to help trace and secure the release of schoolgirls abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army from St. Mary's College, Aboke.

75. Concerning the first objective of his visit, in his discussions with the Government, the Special Representative raised several specific issues concerning the rights, protection and welfare of children affected by the conflict in the Sudan. Those discussions resulted in a number of commitments, as set out in the following paragraphs.

76. *Access to the Nuba mountains.* In a recent discussion with the Secretary-General, the Government of the Sudan promised to allow a United Nations humanitarian assessment mission to travel to areas in the Nuba mountains. The Special Representative raised this matter with the Sudanese Government, which reiterated the commitment made to the Secretary-General, but indicated that the assessment mission should await the completion of an investigation into the recent attack on a United Nations convoy in the area of the Nuba mountains. The Government promised to facilitate the work of the United Nations investigation team.

77. *Recruitment and participation of children in hostilities.* The Government reiterated its commitment, as a matter of policy and law, not to recruit or deploy children under the age of 18 years. The Special Representative urged the Government to ensure that this policy was implemented effectively, including by paramilitary groups aligned with government forces. The Government undertook to correct any deviation from this policy that was brought to its attention.

78. *Use of landmines.* The Special Representative expressed deep concern about the continued use of landmines in the Sudanese conflict. The Sudanese Government, which has signed the Ottawa Convention prohibiting the use of landmines, indicated that it would do everything to avoid deploying landmines. However, it insisted that this was a difficult issue because of the continuing use of landmines by other parties to the conflict and also the fact that several neighbouring countries had not signed the Ottawa Convention. The Special Representative promised to pursue this matter further with all the parties concerned.

79. *Collaboration with the Southern States Coordinating Council.* In his discussion with the Chairman of the Coordinating Council, Riak Machar, the Special Representative emphasized the importance of ensuring the protection, rights and welfare of children in activities under the Council's jurisdiction. Mr. Machar welcomed his proposal to set up a contact group between the Council and relevant United Nations agencies. The contact group would

undertake programmes to build greater awareness within groups under the authority of the Council on humanitarian and human rights standards relating to the protection of children.

80. *Observing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.* The Special Representative urged the Government of the Sudan, which ratified the Convention, to promote the application of its principles and provisions. A national charter based on the Convention, in Arabic and English, was being translated into other, local languages to ensure wider dissemination in the country.

81. During his visit, the Special Representative also learned about the recent humanitarian emergency in the city of Wau in Bahr-al-Ghazal. In the course of the few weeks preceding his visit, an influx of some 80,000 people, predominantly women and young children, had trekked into the city of Wau from SPLA-held areas. It was estimated that this influx was occurring at the rate of a thousand a day. The Special Representative appealed to the international community to reinforce the capacities of the Government and international humanitarian agencies to respond to this situation, especially with the provision of food, medicine and logistical support.

82. The Special Representative was not able to visit the SPLA-controlled areas of the Sudan because of time constraints. However, he met with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's leadership in Nairobi, where he announced his plans to visit those areas soon.

83. The Special Representative was received in Nairobi by the President of Kenya, Mr. Daniel arap Moi, who was also the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs; he briefed them on his visit to the Sudan. He also met with officials of Operation Lifeline Sudan based in Nairobi.

F. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo)

84. The Special Representative paid a three-day visit to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, from 10 to 12 September 1998. Following a one-day stopover for meetings in Belgrade, he spent two days in the province of Kosovo. Throughout the visit, the Special Representative emphasized the humanitarian character of his mandate and his preoccupation with the fate of all children affected by conflict, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliations or the source of their victimization. The visit had three objectives:

(a) To witness first-hand the humanitarian situation in Kosovo and in particular to assess the impact of the ongoing violence on children;

(b) To witness the situation of Serbian refugee children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, most of whose families had earlier fled from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Croatia;

(c) To assess the impact of the ongoing sanctions regime on children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

85. When the Special Representative made the initial request to visit Kosovo, the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expressed strong reservations about the proposed visit, taking the position that there was no "armed conflict" in Kosovo – only acts of terrorism perpetrated by Kosovo Albanians, and that in any case this was purely an internal affair of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the Government's view, therefore, the situation in Kosovo did not fall within the Special Representative's mandate. Following a series of further communications with Belgrade, however, the visit was, in the end, permitted by the Yugoslav authorities.

86. In Belgrade, the Special Representative met with senior government officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Chairman of the Committee for Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Missions and International Forces, the Political Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in charge of the United Nations and international organizations, the President of the Commission for Cooperation with UNICEF and for the Advancement of the Position of Women, and the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees; he also met with most of the ambassadors based in Belgrade, including representatives of the Contact Group, the European Community Monitoring Mission and the European Union Troika; the heads of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations; and the representative of ICRC.

87. In Pristina, the Special Representative held discussions with key Kosovo Albanian political leaders, including the Chairman of the Democratic League of Kosovo, Professor Ibrahim Rugova; and the Head of the Kosovo Albanian Negotiation Team, Mr. Fehmi Agani. He also met with Serbian authorities in Pristina, including the Chief of the Kosovo District Administration; the Coordinator of State Bodies, and other officials. He held discussions with the local heads of UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with members of the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission and with international and local non-governmental organizations.

88. During his stay in Kosovo, the Special Representative travelled extensively, mainly in the south-western and central regions of the province, to assess the situation on the ground by visiting affected villages and towns.

89. He spent a day visiting displaced populations who are spread out and stranded in the open along mountain trails in the Banjca-Nekovac and Gashi valleys, and in the Berisha mountains in the Drenica area, to the west of Pristina. He also visited two collective centres for Serbian refugees, located in the vicinity of Pristina.

90. The Special Representative was shocked by what he witnessed in Kosovo. He encountered and visited miles and miles of children and women spread out like a human carpet in the open along mountain trails and in the woods. He saw a population desperately clinging on the edge of sheer survival – without shelter, clean water, medical attention, warm clothing or adequate food and completely exposed to the elements. On several occasions, he encountered old men and elderly women who, in trying to recount their stories, suddenly broke down, weeping uncontrollably in front of their children and grandchildren.

91. It is estimated that some 300,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in Kosovo, more than 60 per cent of whom are children and over 20 per cent women. About 50,000 of the displaced persons are stranded in the open in the mountains and the woods.

92. In order to end the suffering of civilians in Kosovo, particularly children and women, the Special Representative called on the international community and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to take immediate political action, involving a three-pronged response, as follows:

(a) *Provision of increased humanitarian relief.* Increased resources need to be made available to humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations for the provision of relief supplies to displaced populations, especially the 50,000 children, women and elderly who are now stranded in the open in the mountains and the woods. Their situation will rapidly become untenable with the onset of rains and winter in the coming weeks. In this connection, it is important that the international community respond quickly and generously to the recently launched United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance. Pressure must be brought to bear on the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Liberation Army to allow unimpeded access for the distribution of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian agencies should also provide assistance to local host families who have taken large numbers of displaced persons into their homes;

(b) *Return of displaced populations.* The most critical need at the present time is the return of displaced populations to their homes. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must be made to assume its full responsibility to guarantee security for returnees as well as punish those responsible for committing previous abuse and destruction. Given the present depth of mistrust and fear on the part of Kosovo Albanians, however, there is a need for an increased international humanitarian presence on the ground in Kosovo to serve as a confidence-building measure, to reassure returnees and serve as a deterrent against future abuse by security forces;

(c) *Ceasefire and political negotiations.* The international community must exert greater and concerted political and diplomatic pressure in order to achieve an immediate ceasefire. This is the only way to end the suffering of so many children and women, and to create conditions in which to address the underlying issues in the conflict. Humanitarian response, crucial as it is, must not become a substitute for political action. This is, in part, the lesson of Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

93. In the light of what he witnessed on the ground in Kosovo and the extensive discussions he held with all concerned parties in Belgrade and Pristina, the Special Representative made the following observations and recommendations, corresponding to specific issues:

94. **Impact on neighbouring regions.** It is clear that the violence in Kosovo and the displacement of populations are beginning to have a serious impact on neighbouring regions. Some 40,000 people have fled from Kosovo to Montenegro, 14,000 to Albania and several thousand to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In Montenegro, the number of displaced persons from Kosovo, when combined with refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, represents about 10 per cent of the total population.

95. **Kidnappings and killings by the Kosovo Liberation Army.** There have been several reports of kidnapping and killing of Serbian civilians by the Kosovo Liberation Army. It is estimated that 140 persons, including both Serbians and Albanians, have been abducted by the Kosovo Liberation Army over the past several months. The Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission has also recently reported a mass killing of Christian Albanians and Serbians in the village of Glodjane in the western municipality of Pec. Thus far, the bodies of 39 persons have been recovered, but it is suspected that many more people may have been killed in the Glodjane massacre. The international community must strongly

condemn all atrocities and violence against civilians, regardless of their provenance.

96. **Education for Kosovo Albanians.** One of the most contentious political issues in Kosovo today is the non-participation of Kosovo Albanians in the state educational system at the secondary and university levels. This is due to the ongoing controversy over education policy, curricula etc. As a first step, and in order to open the way for a comprehensive discussion of the problems, the Education Agreement signed in 1996 between President Slobodan Milosevic and Professor Ibrahim Rugova, which provides for ethnic Albanian students and teachers to return to educational premises, should immediately be implemented.

97. **Recruitment and use of children.** Thus far, there is no evidence of the systematic use of children as combatants in the fighting in Kosovo. This contrasts markedly with the situation in many other theatres of conflict today. According to the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission, they have come across two cases of child combatants serving in the Kosovo Liberation Army, both of whom were about 13 years of age. However, it is possible that there may be the use of children in support roles, such as reconnaissance, or serving as messengers and porters. There should be no complacency on this issue; on the contrary, there is a need for preventive advocacy and vigilance to ensure that the situation in Kosovo does not deteriorate further and that fighting forces do not begin to engage children in hostilities.

98. **Use of landmines.** It is reported by the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has undertaken systematic deployment of both anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines in the border areas with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the areas of fighting within Kosovo itself, however, there have so far been only isolated reports of the use of anti-personnel landmines. But here too, there is no reason for complacency. The international community should impress on the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Liberation Army the need to refrain from the use of landmines in Kosovo, which would cause disproportionate and indiscriminate suffering to civilians, especially children.

99. **Assistance for Serbian refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.** There are currently more than half a million Serbian refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, most of whom fled their homes at the height of the armed conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Many of the refugee children and their families feel completely stranded. It is important that the international community does not forget the needs of these refugees, both for humanitarian assistance and for permanent resettlement.

100. **Monitoring the impact of sanctions on children.** As a matter of policy, the Security Council should continue to monitor and seek to mitigate the impact of sanctions on children in all situations. In this connection, the Security Council should review the effect of the ongoing sanctions regime on children in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, particularly with regard to the provision of educational and medical services.

101. **Observing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.** The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The international community should insist that all concerned parties, including non-state actors such as the Kosovo Liberation Army, should fully respect the principles and provisions of the Convention.

VI. Political advocacy

A. Mobilizing concerned Governments

102. The primary responsibility for applying international norms and domestic standards lies with Governments. While international human rights and humanitarian instruments are genuine landmarks and provide a basis for action to protect children victimized by conflict, the gap between these norms and their observance on the ground is unacceptably wide and growing. The primary task of bridging this gap lies with Governments and intergovernmental organizations. The Special Representative, therefore, calls on all Governments to exercise their responsibilities more fully and consistently, to observe local norms and international instruments within their domestic jurisdictions and, at the international level, to apply concerted political and diplomatic pressure on those who systematically violate the rights and welfare of children.

103. The Special Representative has held discussions in capitals and elsewhere with political and government leaders from a number of countries to convey this message and mobilize necessary political support for it. Various Governments have expressed their commitment to make this issue a priority in their diplomatic, development and humanitarian policies.

B. Security Council

104. Since his appointment, the Special Representative has sought to bring the issue of children affected by armed conflict to the attention of the highest political organs of the United Nations. At his request, the Security Council held a public debate on 29 June 1998 on the item "Children and armed conflict". In opening the debate, the Special Representative called upon the Council to consider the plight of children in its deliberations on specific crisis situations, in mandating peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, in the imposition of sanctions regimes, in reviewing standards for the conduct of international personnel and in the design of peace-building programmes. The Special Representative urged the international community to employ its collective influence to ensure the observance, by parties to a conflict, of international norms for the protection of children, and to actively facilitate the achievement of political settlements. Furthermore, the international community can use its weight to deny political legitimacy, diplomatic recognition, the supply of weapons or the flow of funds to those responsible for committing atrocities and abuses against children. The Security Council could take the lead in relaying the clear message that there is no room within the international community for those who systematically commit atrocities and abuses against children.

105. Following the debate, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/1998/18), in which the Council recognized the importance of the mandate of the Special Representative, supported his activities and welcomed his cooperation with all relevant programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations system. The Council expressed its grave concern at the harmful impact of armed conflict on children, strongly condemned the targeting of children in armed conflicts, including their humiliation, brutalization, sexual abuse, abduction and forced displacement, as well as their recruitment and use in hostilities in violation of international law, and called upon all parties concerned to put an end to such activities. The Council supported efforts aimed at obtaining commitments to put to an end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts in violation of international law and to give special consideration to the disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers and to the reintegration into society of children maimed or otherwise traumatized as a result of an armed conflict. It further recognized that, whenever measures were adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, consideration should be given to their impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the needs of children, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions.

106. With the debate and adoption of the presidential statement on this issue, the Security Council has recognized that the situation of children affected by armed conflict is a matter of grave and continuing concern for the Council. The Special Representative will seek to work with the Council on an ongoing basis to ensure that attention is given to child protection in any consideration of humanitarian crises and that necessary political action is taken in situations where the rights and welfare of children are violated.

C. Regional activities

107. Promoting the rights and welfare of children in situations of armed conflict is an agenda that should be developed with the active participation of regional and subregional organizations. A regional or subregional arrangement can often provide a more concrete and local framework for the application of the universal norms and international instruments highlighted above. The Special Representative has encouraged the development of appropriate regional and subregional commitments and initiatives towards this end. He has been working to build strong partnerships with several regional and subregional organizations, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the League of Arab States, OAU, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

108. In this regard, the Special Representative has met with the Secretaries-General of OAU, OSCE and OAS and with the Commissioners for Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the European Union in order to present this agenda to them and seek their support. The European Union, in particular, has expressed a strong interest in working closely with the Special Representative to make the issue of children affected by armed conflict an important item on its agenda, as well as to collaborate actively on humanitarian initiatives and post-conflict projects. Similarly, the Secretary-General of OAU has expressed great interest in collaborating with the Special Representative on this agenda.

109. In an effort to broaden the constituency of ownership of the agenda and to initiate concrete commitments by other actors – Governments, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations – the Special Representative has initiated a series of regional symposia on children affected by armed conflict. The first such symposium was hosted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

as President of the European Union, on 22 and 23 June 1998. The symposium was jointly chaired by the Secretary of State for International Development and the Special Representative.

110. Bringing together senior representatives of European and other Governments, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and regional and academic institutions, the symposium served four important objectives in support of the agenda entrusted to the Special Representative. First, it provided an opportunity for advocacy. Secondly, it generated important political support from participating Governments for the work of the Special Representative. Thirdly, it served as an opportunity for exploring different ideas by experts in areas critical to the agenda, with a view to supporting the Special Representative. Fourthly, the symposium allowed for a further consolidation of partnerships among the Special Representative, Governments and non-governmental organizations in support of a common agenda to protect children's rights in armed conflict situations.

111. As a follow-up to the commitments made at the London symposium, the Special Representative visited Vienna to meet with the Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria who reiterated the strong commitment of Austria, under its European Union Presidency, to develop further the active engagement of the European Union on this agenda. The Special Representative has urged the European Union to incorporate this agenda prominently into its political, humanitarian and development programmes.

112. The Government of Japan has offered to act as host for a similar symposium, to be held in Tokyo later in 1998 for primarily Asian countries. Plans are also under way to convene similar meetings in other regions of the world.

VII. Partnerships for children

113. To advance the objectives set out in his mandate, the Special Representative is working to broaden the ownership of this agenda and seek the participation and collaboration of key actors from several sectors, official and non-official. To carry out a broad strategy of advocacy and collaborative action, he has started to build partnerships with entities from within and outside the United Nations. Each partner, by virtue of its particular comparative advantage, has a significant role to play in concerted action to promote the rights, protection and welfare of children affected by conflict.

A. Developing a framework for collaboration within the United Nations system

114. The role of the Special Representative is that of a catalyst and advocate, highlighting this agenda and fostering concerted action on it within the United Nations system. The main responsibility for developing operational programmes for promoting the rights, protection and welfare of children rests with the agencies and bodies that have the expertise, resources and presence on the ground. The Special Representative complements the activities of these bodies through public advocacy and appropriate political and humanitarian initiatives.

115. When they do adopt a concerted approach towards a common cause, such as the protection or rehabilitation of children, United Nations agencies and bodies can have a significant impact. In support of the Secretary-General's efforts to streamline United Nations activities both at Headquarters and field levels, the Special Representative has been liaising closely with all relevant United Nations entities in order to develop a common approach on the rights, protection and welfare of children in the context of armed conflict, and to place this issue within the mainstream of United Nations policy-making and programme activities. He has consulted widely with the heads of UNICEF, UNHCR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, as well as with senior management committees, in order to develop a framework of institutional and operational collaboration in support of this agenda.

116. The Special Representative is also working through existing executive and consultative mechanisms in order to promote this issue within the mainstream of United Nations activities. His membership in the Senior Management Group chaired by the Secretary-General, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Group enables him to ensure that the children and armed conflict agenda is internalized in United Nations policy-making and programmatic activities.

117. An informal advisory group in support of the work of the Special Representative composed of representatives of UNICEF, UNHCR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, has been established to advise on

programmatic activities, and to coordinate action among these key partners of the Special Representative. The advisory group has proved particularly useful in ensuring the success of the visits of the Special Representative to countries affected by armed conflict.

118. The Special Representative is also a member of the mechanism established by the Department for Disarmament Affairs to coordinate United Nations efforts in controlling the excessive accumulation and proliferation of small arms. Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) is an attempt to address effectively the proliferation of cheap small arms, which are the primary or sole weapons used in numerous intra-state conflicts today, in which up to 90 per cent of the victims are civilians. In these conflicts, children are the victims of small arms fire. Moreover, the proliferation of smaller, lighter arms, and of categories of guns with less and less recoil, has allowed for and induced the recruitment of younger and younger children as gun-bearing soldiers.

B. Engaging civil and non-governmental organizations

119. An important premise of the work of the Special Representative is the need to widen the ownership of this agenda beyond official actors. Civil society organizations, including humanitarian and relief organizations and the human rights community, women's organizations, religious leaders, civic and youth associations, as well as key actors from the private sector, are important partners in the broad movement to protect children's rights and welfare in the context of armed conflict. Non-governmental organizations are particularly important in this regard because of their commitment, expertise and activities on the ground. The Special Representative is encouraging civil society organizations to work to build greater awareness and to mobilize for action on this issue.

120. The Special Representative has now held meetings collectively and individually with the leadership of some 200 international non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations in many countries, mainly drawn from the humanitarian, human rights and development sectors. He has sought their active participation in shaping this agenda and their perspectives on his activities. Several non-governmental organizations from concerned countries have undertaken to develop new programme initiatives and to launch special public awareness campaigns in response to this agenda. Interactions with international and national non-governmental organizations has been a central objective and a crucial source of advice on field missions and other country visits undertaken by the Special Representative. He has also stayed in close contact with groups such as Interaction, the UNICEF NGO Working Group and the Subgroup on Refugee Children and Children in Armed Conflict.

121. In his ongoing discussions with non-governmental organizations, the Special Representative has consistently emphasized several themes, which have been met with a positive response, including, in particular: (a) the necessity for national advocacy programmes to raise public awareness and stimulate governmental action on behalf of children exposed to armed conflict; (b) the urgency of international advocacy campaigns focusing on the rights of children in situations of armed conflict and (c) the importance of organizations with relief, humanitarian and development capacities on the ground to develop more effective and coordinated programmes focusing on the needs of children during and in the aftermath of conflict.

122. The Special Representative endorses and supports the work of several coalitions already established, whose work will directly impact on the protection and well-being of children in situations of armed conflict. One such group is the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, formed to promote the adoption of and adherence to an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, prohibiting the military recruitment and use of any person younger than 18 years. Another coalition is the Leadership Council on Children in Armed Conflict, which advocates action to protect children caught in the brutality of war and support programmes to meet their most urgent needs. Similarly the recently formed International Action Network on Small Arms is committed to mounting a campaign on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

123. The Special Representative believes that local non-governmental organizations that are active in countries affected by conflict, deserve substantial international, particularly financial, support.

C. The media

124. The central role of the media in forming public opinion and influencing policy is pivotal in building public awareness about the abuse and brutalization of children in the context of armed conflict. The Special Representative has sought to engage and inform the media in his advocacy efforts. He has held a series of briefings in different parts of the world for the international and national media to sensitize them to the abuse and brutalization of children in the context of armed conflict and to inform them about his

activities. This dialogue has led to widening media coverage, both in national media and internationally, of the situation of children victimized by conflict.

D. Outreach to opinion leaders

125. The Special Representative has also made particular efforts to get this message into important circles of opinion leaders, groups and networks, including religious leaders, lawyers, academics, business leaders, women's organizations and other professional associations. He has addressed many major international gatherings of political and opinion leaders in different parts of the world. Furthermore, such efforts are planned in the context of ongoing awareness building and public advocacy.

VIII. Setting up the Office of the Special Representative

126. Since his appointment in September 1997, the Special Representative has worked with a skeleton staff of short-term consultants and one staff member. The staffing process has proved to be exceedingly slow and time-consuming which has greatly hampered the scope and speed of the activities of the Special Representative.

127. The Special Representative has also been active in mobilizing voluntary contributions to support his work. He is grateful for the generous and timely "start-up" contributions of several Governments, UNICEF and UNHCR, which have made it possible for the Special Representative to launch his activities. As the Special Representative expands his activities, and with the prospect of a fully operational staff, further contributions will be critical to his sustained effectiveness. A trust fund has been established at the United Nations Secretariat in New York for receiving voluntary contributions from Governments and other institutions.

IX. Next steps

128. As the Special Representative establishes his priorities for the period ahead, a number of areas for action are emerging, including those discussed below.

A. Country visits and follow-up activities

129. Priority will continue to be given to missions to areas affected by armed conflict to advocate for commitments by conflicting parties to stop the involvement and targeting of children, to assure humanitarian access and to advocate humanitarian ceasefires. Progress in the situation of children in countries already visited will be closely monitored, and a process will be set in place for follow-up activities. In those activities, close cooperation will be developed with concerned Governments, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, and other partner agencies of the United Nations system, as well as with international and national non-governmental organizations.

B. Advocacy and communication strategy

130. The Special Representative will be working to develop a stronger and more comprehensive advocacy communications strategy, involving, in particular networks of non-governmental organizations and the various media. His outreach efforts during and after field visits and in concerned countries have included interviews and interaction with various print and broadcasting media. This has generated considerable coverage of the plight of children affected by armed conflict. He will seek to build media interest, generate visual materials and develop a media and advocacy kit.

C. Cooperation at the regional level

131. Attention will be given to a range of initiatives at the regional level. These include the organization of regional symposia to raise awareness of the situation of children affected by armed conflict and to mobilize partnerships for children. Following the example of the London symposium, the Special Representative will pursue collaboration with regional bodies to promote regional initiatives and standard-setting for the protection of children in the context of armed conflict. The Secretary-General of OAU and the Special Representative plan to raise this agenda at the OAU Council of Ministers; they are also working to organize a pan-African symposium for this purpose. Finally, the Special Representative will endeavour to bring together countries in subregional groupings in which children face common threats, such as cross-border small arms trade, the use of landmines, child abductions or child recruitment into armed groups. Such neighbourhood initiatives would seek

commitments from States and non-state parties to take concrete collective measures to better protect children in their neighbourhoods.

D. Monitoring post-conflict response

132. The Special Representative has initiated the designation of certain post-conflict situations as pilot cases, where concerted international assistance in support of children's needs could prove particularly effective in the peace-building process. These pilot cases will be studied so as to derive "best practices" and "lessons learned". Certain priority areas of concern are clear, including the social reintegration of child combatants, the resettlement of displaced children or the restitution of basic health services and education facilities for children. Monitoring could begin in Sierra Leone, the first such pilot case to be identified. The results of such monitoring, to be undertaken in collaboration with independent research institutions, will be reviewed and shared with partners to enable them to maximize the impact of their advocacy and action for children both at the country level and internationally.

E. Promoting research on thematic issues

133. The Special Representative will continue to promote collaborative research in selected thematic areas where gaps in knowledge exist and which are of particular potential benefit to children exposed to armed conflict, as well as to organizations and institutions acting on their behalf. One such priority area is sexual abuse and violence, particularly against girls and young women. A second area is the role of local value systems; independent research institutions will be encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of local values favouring child protection and welfare, the status of such values and the ways in which they can be reinforced. The doctrine of *Lapir* among the Acholi of Uganda and the *Sande* and *Poro* schools in rural Liberia are cases in point. A third area that requires further research is the impact of small arms and light weapons on children.

F. Strengthening standards for peacekeeping personnel

134. The Special Representative and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations have held a series of discussions on ways in which standards, procedures and training related to the conduct of peacekeeping personnel can be strengthened. In support of their common commitment to the review and reinforcement of current arrangements, a consultative group has been formed to undertake this exercise and to issue its outcome at the earliest possible date. The Special Representative has sought the perspectives and input of several interested delegations, United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as non-governmental organizations.

G. Development of a database

135. It is recognized that a number of partners have already initiated database development on specific issues relating to the impact of armed conflict on children. There will be no duplication of these efforts. Rather, the Special Representative hopes to draw on existing bases of information to facilitate advocacy activities.

136. Much of the information on children affected by armed conflict at present is diffuse, segmented and not readily accessible. In order to fill these gaps, the Special Representative has approached various research institutions and non-governmental organizations to encourage them to develop databases and other information on children affected by armed conflict; this will also permit key gaps in the present body of knowledge to be identified and filled. Several institutions have responded positively to this invitation. Essex University, for example, has created a new Centre on Children and Armed Conflict; the Centre is currently compiling existing information on all aspects of children affected by armed conflict. Similarly, the Special Representative is drawing on information compiled by Rädda Barnen of Sweden on child soldiers to facilitate his advocacy work.

H. Informal support group for the Special Representative

137. A number of Member States have expressed strong support for the work of the Special Representative. This support has resulted in the formation of an informal support group, a group of "Friends of the Special Representative". It is hoped that this informal group will play an important role by providing ongoing support and advice to the Special Representative in developing his role and activities. The Special Representative plans to constitute a similar support group from the ranks of leading non-governmental organizations.

X. Recommendations

138. The mandate of the Special Representative provides a unique platform for advocacy on behalf of children affected by armed conflict, with a wide range of interlocutors in a variety of domains and networks, including: (a) human rights and humanitarian circles; (b) political, social, economic and cultural groups; (c) civil society organizations; (d) media and communications networks; (e) academics; (f) the international private sector; and (g) financial institutions. The Special Representative can draw public and political attention to the plight of conflict-affected children. He may use humanitarian diplomacy to obtain commitments from belligerents or facilitate humanitarian access, or advocate for preventive and post-conflict recovery measures to assure child rights and protection in these environments. Yet he cannot and will not act in isolation. He works in concert with partners, each of which have specific mandates and capacities that can ensure that commitments to children are fulfilled internationally and on the ground.

139. On the basis of the experience over the past year, the Special Representative is making the following observations and recommendations to generate reflection and discussion, and to serve as a basis for ongoing dialogue with Governments, partners within the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors.

A. Political support for this agenda

140. The Special Representative believes that the most important and pressing challenge today is how to translate existing standards and commitments into action that can make a tangible difference to the fate of children exposed to danger on the ground. Words on paper cannot save the children in peril. It is important that concerned Governments incorporate the protection of children prominently in their foreign policies. And, above all, concerned Governments and other key international actors should be prepared to use their collective weight and influence to deny political legitimacy, diplomatic recognition, the supply of weapons or the flow of funds to those responsible for committing atrocities and abuses against children. In today's interdependent world, no warring party – whether a Government or an insurgency group – can ignore the prospects of such censure and isolation by the wider international community.

B. Security Council

141. The public debate and subsequent statement by the Security Council on the item "Children and armed conflict" was an important and ground-breaking development. The Special Representative urges the Council to remain actively engaged on this issue. And in its future consideration of specific crisis situations, in mandating peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, in the imposition of sanctions regimes, in reviewing standards for the conduct of international personnel, and in the design of peace-building programmes – the rights, protection and welfare of children affected by conflicts will constitute a central and continuing concern.

C. Building partnerships with non-governmental organizations

142. Non-governmental and other civil society organizations have an indispensable role in shaping the agenda for children affected by armed conflict. Their contribution is crucial in many areas. The Special Representative is calling on them to develop activities in three areas in particular: building a movement of advocacy at both the national and international levels; developing operational programmes on the ground to respond better to the needs of victimized children; and to serve as an important source of independent and objective information on particular situations and issues.

D. Initiatives in the midst of conflicts

143. More determined efforts must be employed to prevent or mitigate the suffering of children who are actually caught up in the midst of ongoing conflicts. The following are some of the issues around which the international community should seek to construct concrete initiatives on the ground: access to populations in distress, most of whom are women and children; recruitment and use of children; monitoring and restricting the supply of arms, especially light weapons, to theatres of conflict; and attending more effectively to the needs of displaced populations, the majority of whom are children.

E. Reinforcing initiatives by the Special Representative

144. The capacity of the Special Representative to help ensure the protection and well-being of children in situations of armed conflict will be greatly enhanced by the political support of concerned Governments, both individually and collectively. Where the Special Representative is able to obtain commitments from parties to protect children and civilians, insistence by concerned Governments that such parties honour commitments made is essential. More generally, concrete endorsement and reinforcement by such Governments of initiatives of the Special Representative could greatly enhance the impact of his initiatives on behalf of children.

F. Post-conflict peace-building

145. In post-conflict situations, sustained assistance for reconstruction is required in order to consolidate peace and to support indigenous rehabilitation capacity. A critical component of such assistance must focus on the needs of children, particularly the "crisis of the young". The Special Representative believes that the prospects for recovery in many countries depends very much on recuperating the young and restoring to them a sense of renewed hope. In this connection, the Special Representative calls on key actors responsible for designing post-conflict peace-building programmes, in particular the World Bank, the European Union, UNDP and bilateral development agencies, to make the needs of children a central concern from the outset of their planning. Moreover, post-conflict peace-building must not mean a return to the status quo ante, a return to the conditions that gave rise to the conflict in the first place. In order to prevent the recurrence of conflict and to rebuild lasting peace, we must work systematically to transcend the distorted relationships of yesteryear.

G. Building local capacities for advocacy

146. It is important to build, within countries, independent local capacities for advocacy on behalf of children affected by armed conflict. This is much needed both in the midst of ongoing violence and in the aftermath of war. The Special Representative is promoting two kinds of projects for this purpose: the formation of an informal group of eminent persons to serve as local advocates within a country; and the establishment of local radio stations or programmes – "Voice of Children" – devoted to the needs and interests of children. Such projects, while locally driven, will require strong support from international partners.

H. Raising the age limit for recruitment and participation

147. The Special Representative strongly supports the movement to raise the legal age limit for recruitment and participation of children in hostilities from 15 to 18 years. This is an important component of a broader strategy to eradicate altogether the use of children in armed conflicts. In tandem with this effort, the Special Representative believes that there is an urgent need to organize a more effective campaign of pressure for the observance of existing legal standards in present theatres of conflict.

I. Reviewing the effects of sanctions on children

148. The Special Representative is encouraged by the readiness of the Security Council to consider humanitarian exemptions to measures adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to ensuring the welfare of children. All efforts should be made to relieve the suffering of children living under sanctions regimes. In this respect, the Special Representative endorses the conclusions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in particular supports efforts aimed at addressing the negative impact on infants and children of the sanctions regime against Iraq. He also encourages a review of the impact on children of the sanctions regimes against Burundi and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Such reviews should address in particular the health, educational and nutritional needs of affected children.

J. Promoting local value systems

149. Perhaps the most damaging loss a society can suffer is the collapse of its own local value system. Tragically, especially during periods of protracted conflicts, we are witnessing a breakdown of traditional norms and social codes of behaviour, with horrendous consequences for children in particular, and civilian populations in general. In this context, the Special Representative believes that it is essential to strengthen the various institutions and networks that traditionally inculcate values and that protect children and promote their welfare, such as parents,

extended families, elders, teachers, schools and religious institutions. The mainstay of this effort must be the local community. This community-based process should then be integrated with and reinforced by contemporary norms that have been developed at the international level.

K. From humanitarian response to political action

150. In his various field visits, the Special Representative was struck by the deep and palpable yearning, on the part of the populations, for the end of violence and the restoration of peace. He was equally struck by the increasing frustrations of relief agencies, which often felt they were only able to provide limited "band-aid" solutions.

151. The international community must exert greater and concerted political efforts to address directly the real issues in conflict situations. This is the only way to end the suffering of so many children and women. This humanitarian response, therefore, important as it is in helping to save lives, must not become a substitute for political action.

L. Preventing conflict at the source

152. Armed conflicts have their roots in structural inequities and various practices of exclusion and marginalization. In too many societies today, we are witnessing a phenomenon in which, within a country, there has developed a *centre-and-periphery* relationship, a situation in which there are systematic imbalances in the distribution of development resources and political power between different parts and sectors of the same country. In order to prevent conflicts, which destroy the lives of children, international and national actors alike must take political, economic and social measures that can generate within communities a sense of hope in place of despair, a sense of inclusion and participation instead of exclusion, and a sense of belonging rather than of alienation. Similarly, it is critical to build genuine democratic practice and the rule of law, because in the long run this provides a non-violent and routine way of mediating competing claims within a society.

United Nations A/53/483

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 81
Effects of atomic radiation

Effects of atomic radiation

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 52/55 of 10 December 1997, the General Assembly invited the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization to consider the functions and role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and to submit a recommendation to the Assembly at its fifty-third session.

2. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the attached report, which was prepared by the World Health Organization.

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Annex

Report prepared by the World Health Organization

I. Functions and role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

1. The major aims of the Committee's work are to assess the consequences to human health of a wide range of doses of ionizing radiation and to estimate the dose to people all over the world from natural and man-made radiation sources.

2. Since the Committee began its work in 1955, 13 reports summarizing all available scientific information on radiation sources and effects of ionizing radiation have been prepared and presented to the General Assembly, and thereby to the scientific and world community. The latest findings and evaluations of the Committee have been issued in a series of publications: the Committee's 1993 report, with nine scientific annexes, the Committee's 1994 report, with two scientific annexes and the Committee's 1996 report, with one scientific annex. These three publications form a series of reports entitled "Sources and effects of ionizing radiation".

3. Information collected and interpreted in the Committee reports is very useful for United Nations Member States and international organizations in their activities related to planning and implementation of radiation protection programmes. For example, the Committee report for 1993 provides the results of an evaluation by the Committee of the biological effects of ionizing radiation, levels of exposure from natural sources, nuclear power production, major accidents, nuclear explosions and from the production of nuclear weapons. In addition, it considers levels from medical and occupational exposures and the perception of radiation risks. Epidemiological studies of cancer risks associated with both external and internal exposure to ionizing radiation were the subject of an extensive review in the Committee's 1994 report. The Committee's 1996 report evaluates the effects of ionizing radiation on plants and animals in the environment.

4. The Committee also evaluates current concepts regarding the mechanisms of radiation cancerogenesis, influence of radiation dose and dose rate on stochastic effects, hereditary effects of radiation, medical consequences of exposure to radiation of the developing human brain and late deterministic effects in children. The assessment of cancer risks is based on analysis of epidemiological studies of cancer mortality and incidence among the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, patients exposed to radiation for diagnosis and therapeutic purposes, and radiation workers and individuals exposed to environmental radiation. During the last few years, the Committee has paid more attention to the study of cancer risks in various groups with exposure to plutonium in some nuclear facilities and radon in mines and homes. In addition, more emphasis is being put on such aspects as how to transfer radiation-induced risks from one population to another, the potential for bias or confounding, the impact of errors in dosimetry, and other sources of uncertainty in radiation epidemiology studies.

5. The Committee continues its efforts to further evaluate the sources and effects of ionizing radiation. A series of Committee documents issued in 1997 shows that the Committee focuses on the evaluation of new scientific results regarding the radiation effects at cellular and molecular levels and new information from radiobiological and epidemiological studies. They concern, in particular, DNA repair and mutagenesis, estimation of genetic risks, combined effects of radiation and other agents, dose assessment methodology, and epidemiological evaluation of radiation-induced cancer. It is expected that in two years the Committee will publish a comprehensive report which will improve the understanding of the effects of radiation and the underlying risks.

6. Analysis of the Committee's activities carried out during the 43 years of its work shows that the Committee, from the WHO point of view, has been following its functions which were outlined in United Nations General Assembly resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955. Committee reports have provided valuable contributions to understanding the mechanisms of the health effects of ionizing radiation, developing basic safety standards, and improving the use of ionizing radiation in medicine and promoting radiation protection programmes at national and international levels. The Committee keeps its leading role in the world as the only international committee providing comprehensive evaluation of the effects of ionizing radiation.

II. Administrative arrangements for the Committee's secretariat

7. The Committee's secretariat has been located in Vienna since 1974 when the United Nations General Assembly accepted an offer of accommodation from the Government of Austria. The secretariat consists of the Director and two General Service staff members. The United Nations Office at Vienna (since 1979) provides administrative support services for the Committee and its activities are supported financially through the United Nations programme budget approved by the General Assembly. The Committee reports and other technical documents are prepared by consultants and discussed at regular sessions of the Committee.

8. During the period from its establishment in 1955 to 1974, the Committee's secretariat was located at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Until 1976, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs provided the Committee with administrative support. The transferring of the Committee's secretariat to Europe facilitated its cooperation with relevant international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

III. Relationship between the World Health Organization and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

9. The activities of WHO and the Committee in the field of evaluation of the health effects of ionizing radiation are complementary and not competitive. Both organizations have always been paying due attention to the assessment of radiation effects on humans and their offspring, environmental radioactivity and its possible health implications. In this context, the Committee provides general assessment of worldwide information regarding sources, levels and effects of ionizing radiation. This assessment also includes relevant WHO reports and publications. WHO concentrates its attention on such matters as the assessment of the health impacts of the application of nuclear technology, comparison of these impacts with outputs of other technologies for achieving the same goal, evaluation of health implications of nuclear power, and prevention or mitigation of hazardous health effects of ionizing radiation. WHO activities in radiation protection are, however, not restricted to the evaluation of health effects. They deal with a broad spectrum of problems such as development of basic radiation protection standards, diagnosis of overexposure and treatment of radiation injuries, medical supervision of radiation workers, radiation protection of patients and personnel in hospitals, medical handling of radiation emergencies, etc. The primary aim of WHO in the field of radiation protection is to improve radiation protection services at national and international levels. The Committee assessments serve as a basis in this direction.

10. Cooperation between WHO and the Committee has a long history. For example, a representative of the Committee took part in the first meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on Radiation (Effects of Radiation on Human Heredity), which was held at Geneva from 28 July to 2 August 1958. As a rule, both organizations inform each other about relevant arrangements and invite each other to participate in meetings. Many Committee sessions were attended by WHO representatives and their contributions to the discussions were acknowledged by the Committee.

11. The Chernobyl accident gave a strong new impulse for further cooperation between WHO and the Committee. In the first years after the accident, WHO, jointly with other international organizations (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, IAEA, the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Nuclear Energy Agency, and the Pan American Health Organization), initiated the development of International Basic Safety Standards for protection against ionizing radiation and for the safety of radiation sources. It took almost 10 years to develop and publish these standards (IAEA, Vienna, 1996) which are based on the evaluations of sources and effects of ionizing radiation provided by the Committee. Both organizations participated in the International Chernobyl Project. WHO provided the Committee's secretariat with a scientific report on the results of the WHO International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident in order to include the results obtained in the Committee's assessments of health consequences of the catastrophe. The Committee's secretariat cooperated with WHO, IAEA and the European Commission in the organization of the international conference "One Decade after Chernobyl – Summing up the Consequences of the Accident" (Vienna, 1996).

12. One of the latest cooperative activities of WHO and the Committee was the International Conference on "Low doses of ionizing radiation: biological effects and regulatory control", which was held in Seville, Spain in 1997. The

conference was jointly sponsored by WHO and IAEA. The keynote presentation on "Sources, exposures and biological effects of ionizing radiation" was provided by the Committee secretariat.

IV. The Committee's reporting arrangements

13. The Committee has been operating as an independent scientific board within the framework of the United Nations system. It has been directly reporting to the General Assembly. However, as part of the reform process of the United Nations system, the General Assembly, in resolution 52/55 of 10 December 1997, requested the Committee to submit its next report to WHO and IAEA, as well as to the Assembly, which will consider the report together with the evaluation of the report by WHO and IAEA.

14. The possibility of merging the secretariats of the Committee and IAEA was considered by the General Assembly in 1991 (resolution 46/185 C). However, IAEA felt that the Committee should preserve full independence because the mandates of these two institutions were quite distinct. This position was supported by the Committee, which reported to the Assembly in June 1992 that alternative arrangements for its secretariat might well prejudice the perception of both its authority and its independence.

V. Recommendations to the General Assembly

15. The World Health Organization recommends that the General Assembly maintain the present functions and independent scientific role of the Committee, including the present reporting arrangements.

16. It further recommends that, should the General Assembly decide otherwise, the Secretary-General consult with the World Health Organization prior to any such decision in order to consider other institutional arrangements such as a WHO/IAEA joint scientific committee.

VI. Evaluation of the annual report submitted by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to the General Assembly in 1998

17. The Committee's report provides the General Assembly with information on the Committee's progress of work. The report covers issues such as the function and role of the Committee, interactions with other United Nations agencies, the present and future programme, and ends with a summary and recommendations to the General Assembly.

18. The Committee's current and planned activities are consistent with its mandate, which has been reviewed since 1955 when the Committee was established.

19. The Committee is now the major international body which reviews the exposure of the world population to all radioactive sources under normal circumstances and after major radiological accidents. Comprehensive scientific reports are submitted to the General Assembly at intervals of several years and serve as a basis for the development of international radiation safety standards, promotion of scientific knowledge on the health effects of ionizing radiation, evaluation of radiation risks and planning of research.

20. The Committee has paid major attention to the primary late effects of exposure of a population to ionizing radiation. It has looked at the probability of the development of an excess of cancers many years after exposure. Scientific analysis of available data of epidemiological, experimental and molecular biology studies has shown significant increases in the risk estimates over time. This Committee's conclusion is based on the evaluation of cancer morbidity and mortality in cohorts exposed to ionizing radiation due to the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and other groups of population irradiated for medical diagnostic or therapeutic reasons.

21. The Committee's estimates of radiation risks, levels of environmental radioactivity, and radiation health effects are widely used throughout the world. The Committee's comprehensive scientific reports on sources and effects of ionizing radiation have become one of the more significant and important guides for those who are working in the field of radiation protection, radiobiology, radiation medicine and epidemiology.

22. The Committee involves the work of many reputable scientists and specialists representing more than 20 States

Members of the United Nations. It should be emphasized that the Committee's scientific reports have been widely evaluated by the experts of many relevant national and international organizations, including WHO, before being submitted to the General Assembly. Those aspects of radiation biological or health effects, especially at the level of low doses of ionizing radiation, which have not yet been scientifically assessed, are clearly identified by the Committee as areas requiring further research.

23. The Committee has been fruitfully cooperating with WHO which has been regularly invited to meetings and has actively participated in the discussions and commentaries on the Committee's reports.

24. The approach used by the Committee has assisted in the development of many scientific projects for the evaluation of the health effects of the Chernobyl accident included, for example, in the International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident (IPHECA) carried out under the auspices of WHO.

25. The Committee's decision to produce a review of the available information 12 to 14 years after the Chernobyl accident, for publication in a scientific report in the year 2000, is fully supported.

26. In the light of the above-mentioned points, WHO agrees with the recommendation of the report, namely, that on the basis of this summary of the Committee's past and present programmes, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly maintain the present functions and role of the Committee, including the present reporting arrangements. This is in agreement with WHO Executive Board resolution (EB 102.R2) which recommends that the present functions and independent scientific role of the Committee, including the present reporting arrangements, should be maintained.

27. The above-mentioned justifies an overall positive assessment of the Committee's annual report.

United Nations A/53/484

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 October 1998
English
Original: French

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 20 (b)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Letter dated 8 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the Sudan by the Presidency of the European Union issued on 7 October 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and of its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative
of Austria to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Sudan issued on 7 October 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union is deeply concerned by the hostilities in southern Sudan, which are seriously undermining the international community's humanitarian efforts aimed at assisting the populations of the regions badly affected by famine.

The European Union strongly appeals to both parties to extend the ceasefire in Bahr el Ghazal beyond 15 October 1998 and to meet urgently, at a high level of representation, in the technical committee on humanitarian assistance, under the chairmanship of the United Nations, in order to consider appropriate ways to enable relief supplies to reach all areas in need.

The European Union and its States members, in their public opinion, will not understand and will find it unjustifiable if, after all the efforts deployed, the humanitarian crisis in Bahr el Ghazal worsens again, owing to the lack of willingness of the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to agree on a timely extension of the ceasefire.

The European Union considers that the dramatic humanitarian situation prevailing in southern Sudan demands from the parties that they adopt a coherent and responsible attitude vis-à-vis the populations, and reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing civil war, which is causing the suffering of the populations and the instability of the region. The parties are urged to agree to put an end to the hostilities and to accelerate the peace process within the IGAD peace initiative. The European Union also encourages the IGAD partner's forum to continue and reinforce its support to the IGAD peace process as the appropriate framework for the search for a political solution to this conflict, which has lasted more than 15 years.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the European Free Trade Association countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

United Nations A/53/485

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 October 1998
English
Original: Arabic

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 113

Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Tammam **Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 4th to 6th meetings, on 6, 7 and 12 October 1998. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/53/SR.4-6).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998 (A/52/898 and Corr.1);

(b) Third report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/53/7/Add.2).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.6

4. At the 6th meeting, on 12 October 1998, the representative of the Bahamas, and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, and coordinator of informal consultations, introduced and orally corrected a draft resolution entitled "Analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall

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cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998" (A/C.5/53/L.6).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.6 without a vote (see para. 6).

III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and proposals pursuant to General Assembly decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and subsequent relevant resolutions,

Recalling its resolutions 51/167 of 15 December 1996 and 52/220 of 22 December 1997 and decision 52/462 of 31 March 1998,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the analysis of savings resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat,[1]

Having considered the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]

Emphasizing the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in particular, in priority areas,

1. *Endorses* the proposals of the Secretary-General, on the understanding that the amount to be utilized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should not exceed 5,526,600 United States dollars;

2. *Agrees* to the use of the amount of 1,088,000 dollars for the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the Commissions in accordance with paragraph 114 of the document entitled "A Partnership for Growth and Development",[3] on the understanding that:

[1] A/52/898 and Corr.1

[2] A/53/7/Add.2

[3] See A/51/308

(a) It would only involve a one-time expenditure within the framework of the biennium 1998–1999, made possible because of extra resources that have been allocated as a result of underspending;

(b) The financing of experts would not set a precedent regarding the financing from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development regular budget of the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the Commissions of the Trade and Development Board, in accordance with paragraph 114 of the document entitled "A Partnership for Growth and Development";[3]

(c) Special consideration would be given to the needs of developing countries, in particular, the least developed countries;

3. *Invites* the Trade and Development Board to take a final decision at its forty-fifth session (12–23 October 1998), on the question of the selection, nomination and appointment of experts to participate in the expert meetings of its Commissions, so as to enable the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development secretariat to carry out the foreseen activities without further delay;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the implementation by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of the activities financed by the unspent balance referred to in paragraph 1 above, and on how the accomplishments had contributed to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in particular, in priority areas;

5. *Considers* that significant savings had been achieved by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as a direct result of decisions of the ninth session of the Conference, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat;

6. *Regrets* the lack of clear information concerning the savings achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the reform of its secretariat, and takes note, in this context, of the indication, in paragraph 8 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2] that an amount of 2 million dollars, which is part of the above-mentioned savings, could be traceable to the reduction in the conference-servicing requirements of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development undertaken as a result of the ninth session, and agrees with the Advisory Committee that this information should have been reflected in the report of the Secretary-General;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, comprehensive information on the savings, including the amount of 2 million dollars referred to above, resulting from the improved overall cost-effectiveness achieved pursuant to the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery and the reform of the secretariat, as requested in its resolutions 51/167 and 52/220;

8. *Decides* to continue consideration of this question during the main part of its fifty-fourth session.